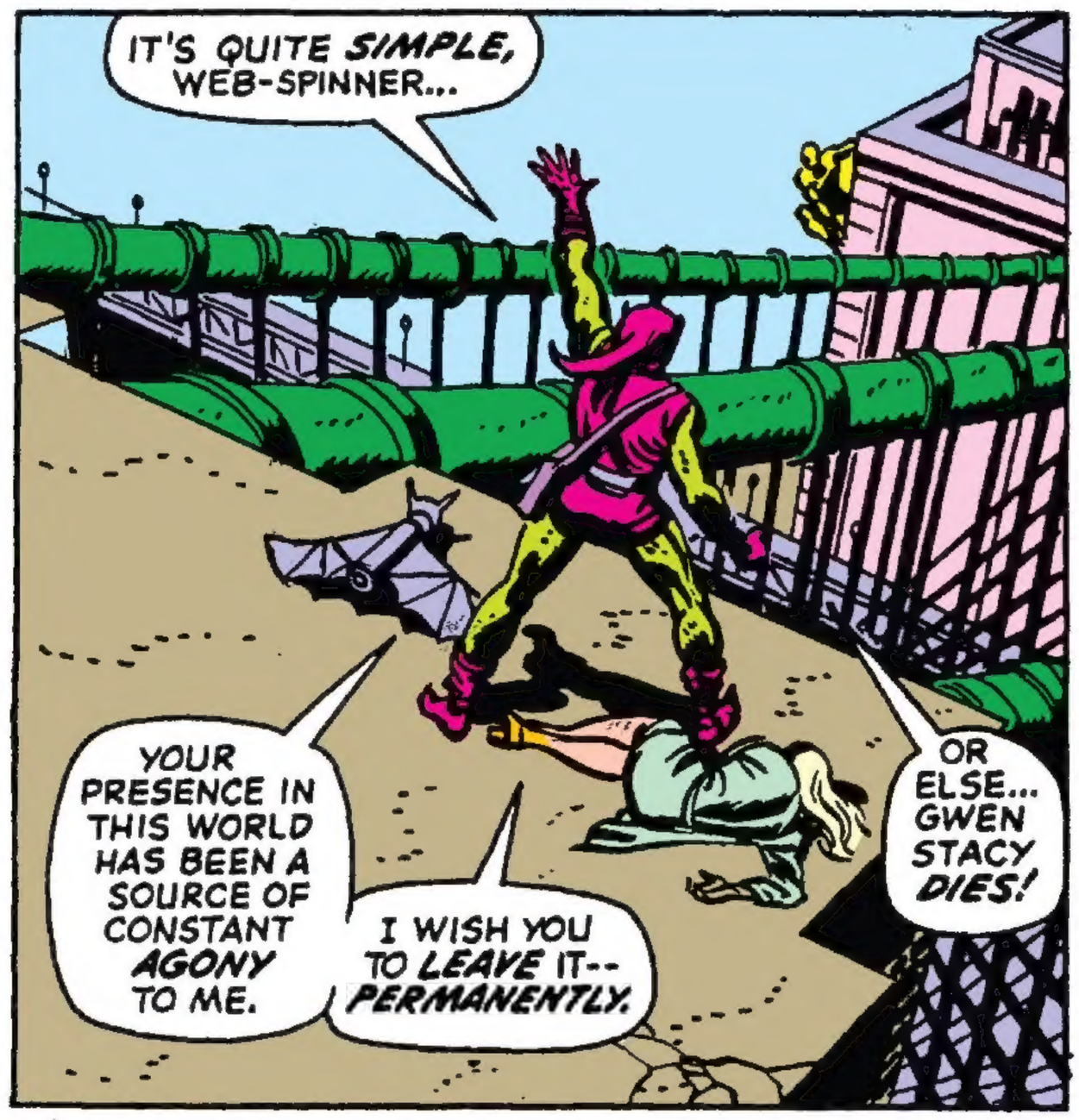
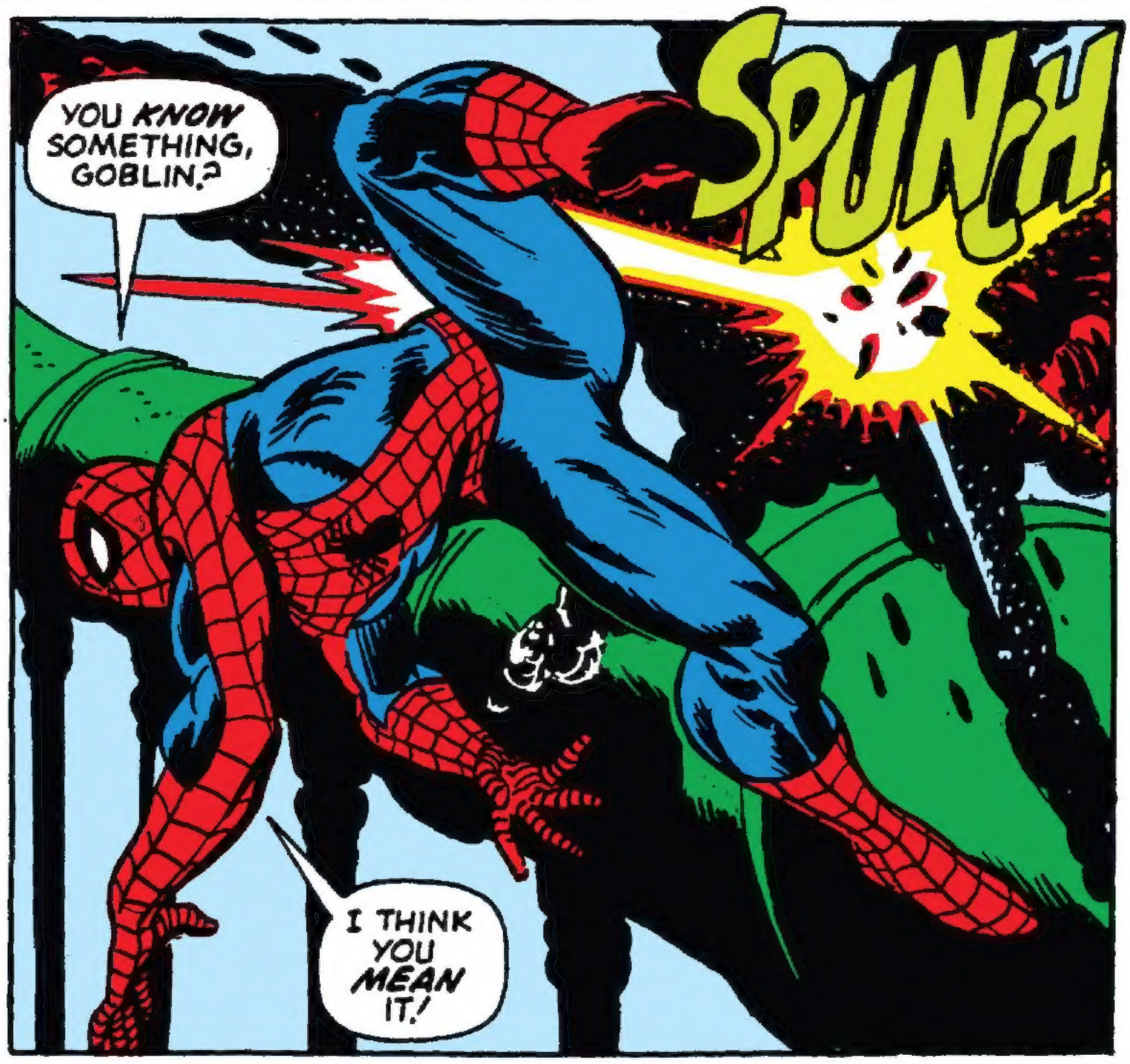
MARVEL
1
WHAT IF...? DARK
SPIDER-GWEN
GERRY CONWAY
JODY HOUSER
RAMÓN F. BACHS
DEE CUNNIFFE
LAND
fgd

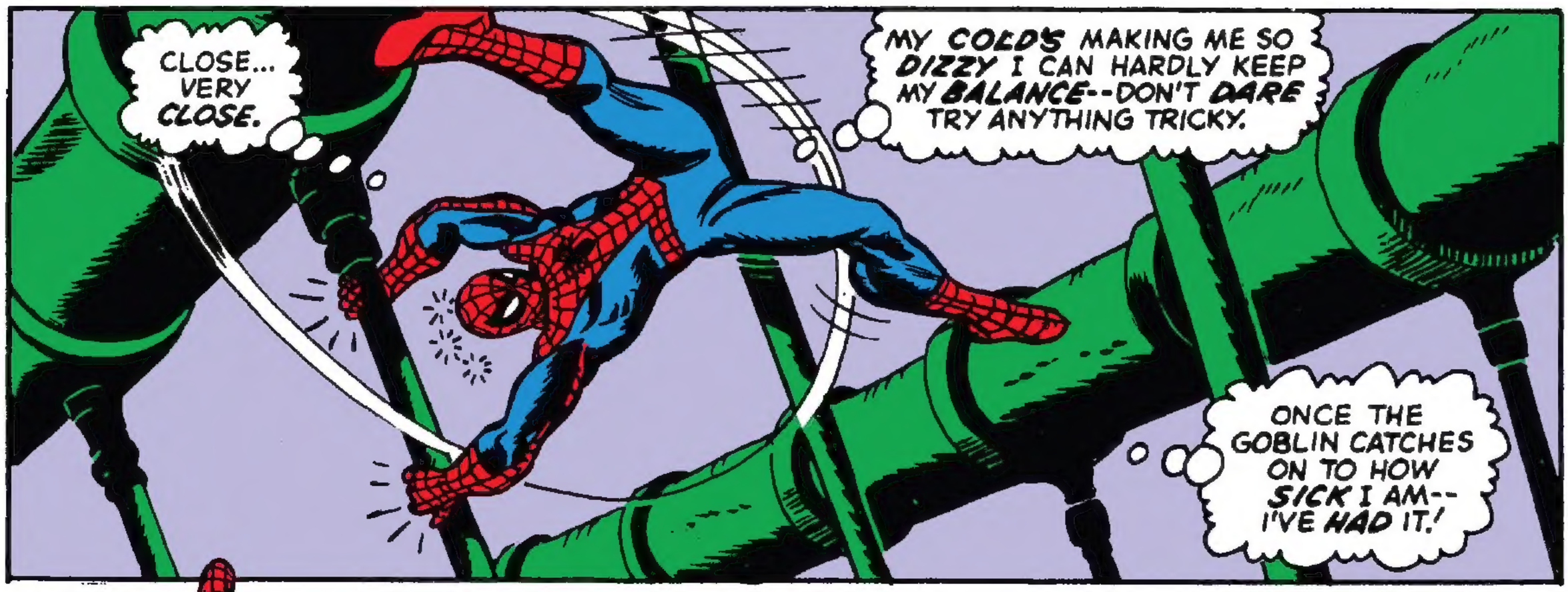
SPIDER-MAN! OR SHOULD I SAY--MISTER PARKER?
I HAVE YOUR WOMAN UP HERE, MY FRIEND--
I TRUST YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS?
YOU TELL ME, GOBLIN.

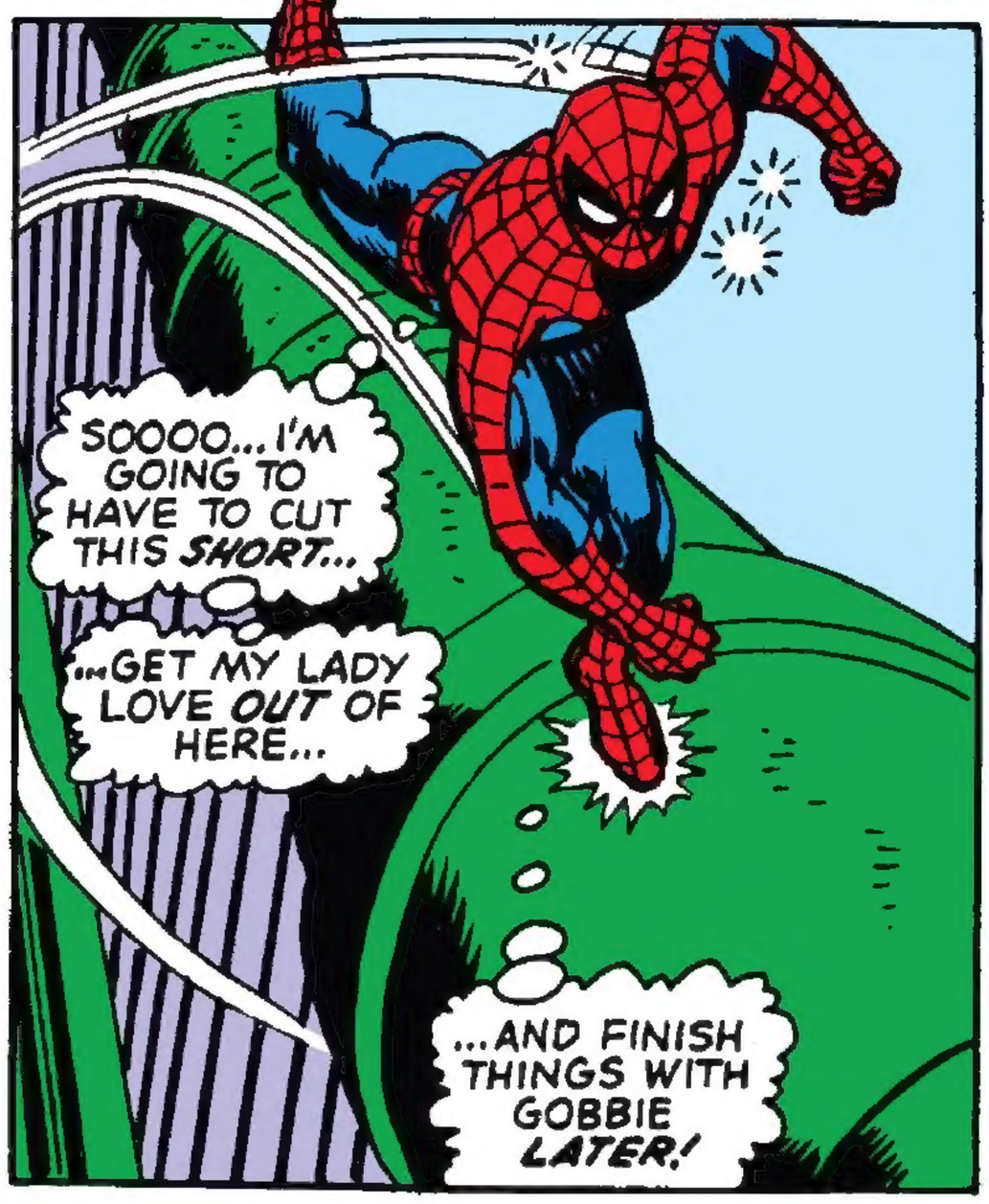

IT'S QUITE SIMPLE, WEB-SPINNER...
YOUR PRESENCE IN THIS WORLD HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF CONSTANT AGONY TO ME.
I WISH YOU TO LEAVE IT--PERMANENTLY.
OR ELSE... GWEN STACY DIES!

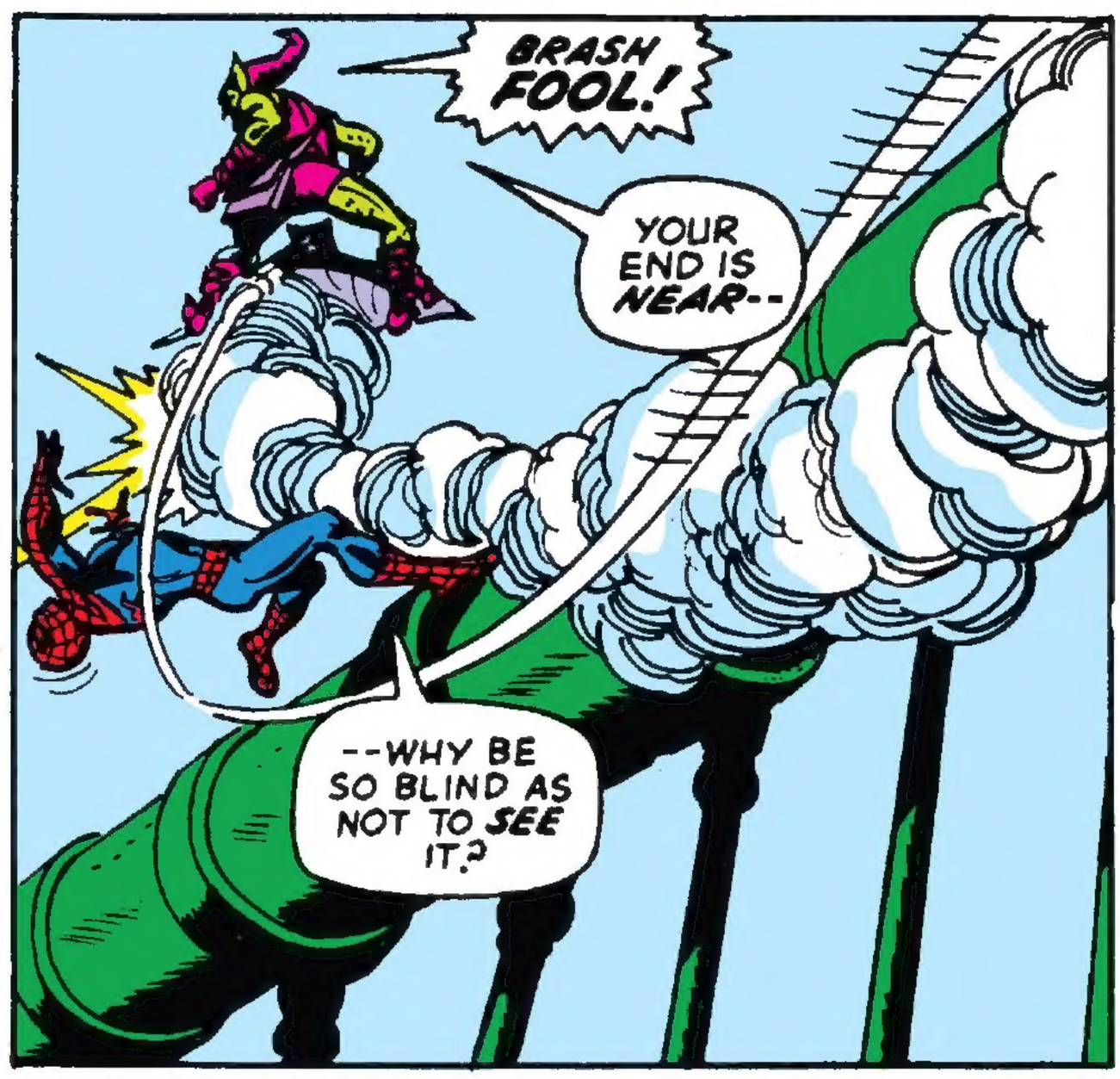
THAT CUTS IT, PUMPKIN BOY.
UP TO NOW, I'VE BEEN REAL FRIENDLY--CONSIDERING YOUR PROBLEMS, AND ALL THAT.
BUT, BUSTER--WHEN YOU START THREATENING MY GIRL--

--THE KID GLOVES ARE OFF!
A MOST CHIVALROUS ATTITUDE.
PITY YOU WON'T LIVE TO ENACT IT!

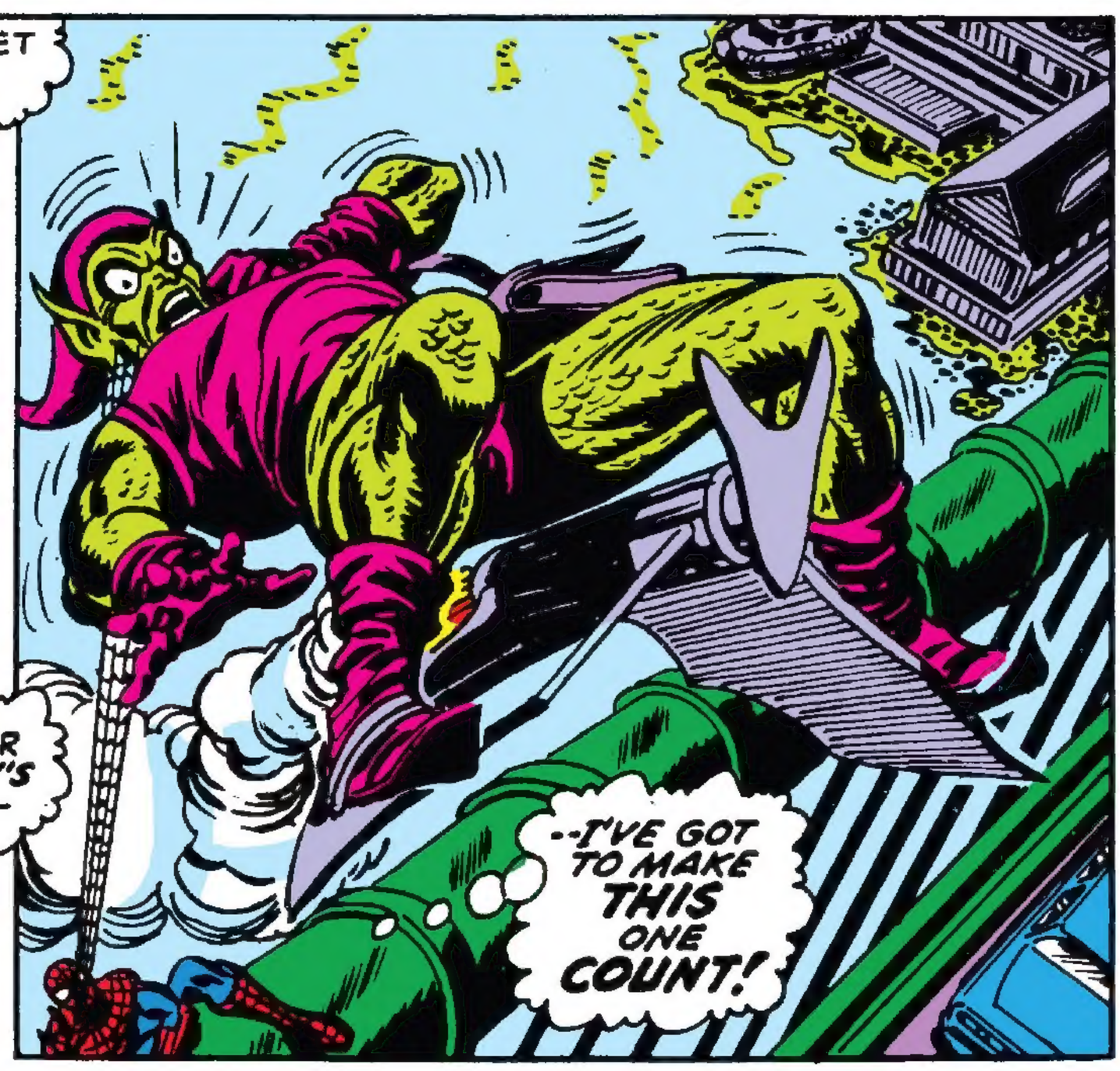

YOU KNOW SOMETHING, GOBLIN?
SPUNCH
I THINK YOU MEAN IT!

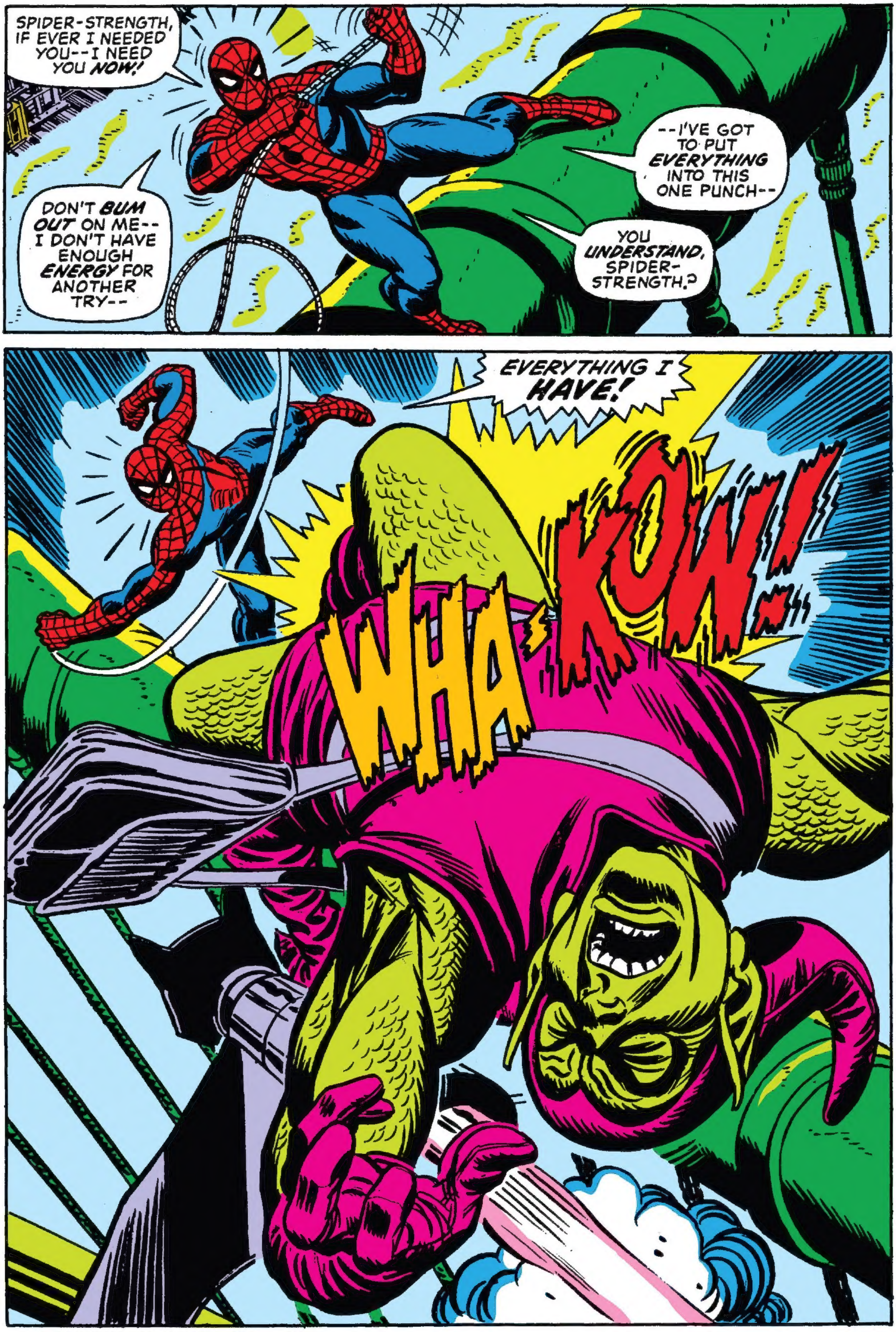

CLOSE... VERY CLOSE.
MY COLD'S MAKING ME SO DIZZY I CAN HARDLY KEEP MY BALANCE--DON'T DARE TRY ANYTHING TRICKY.
ONCE THE GOBLIN CATCHES ON TO HOW SICK I AM--I'VE HAD IT!

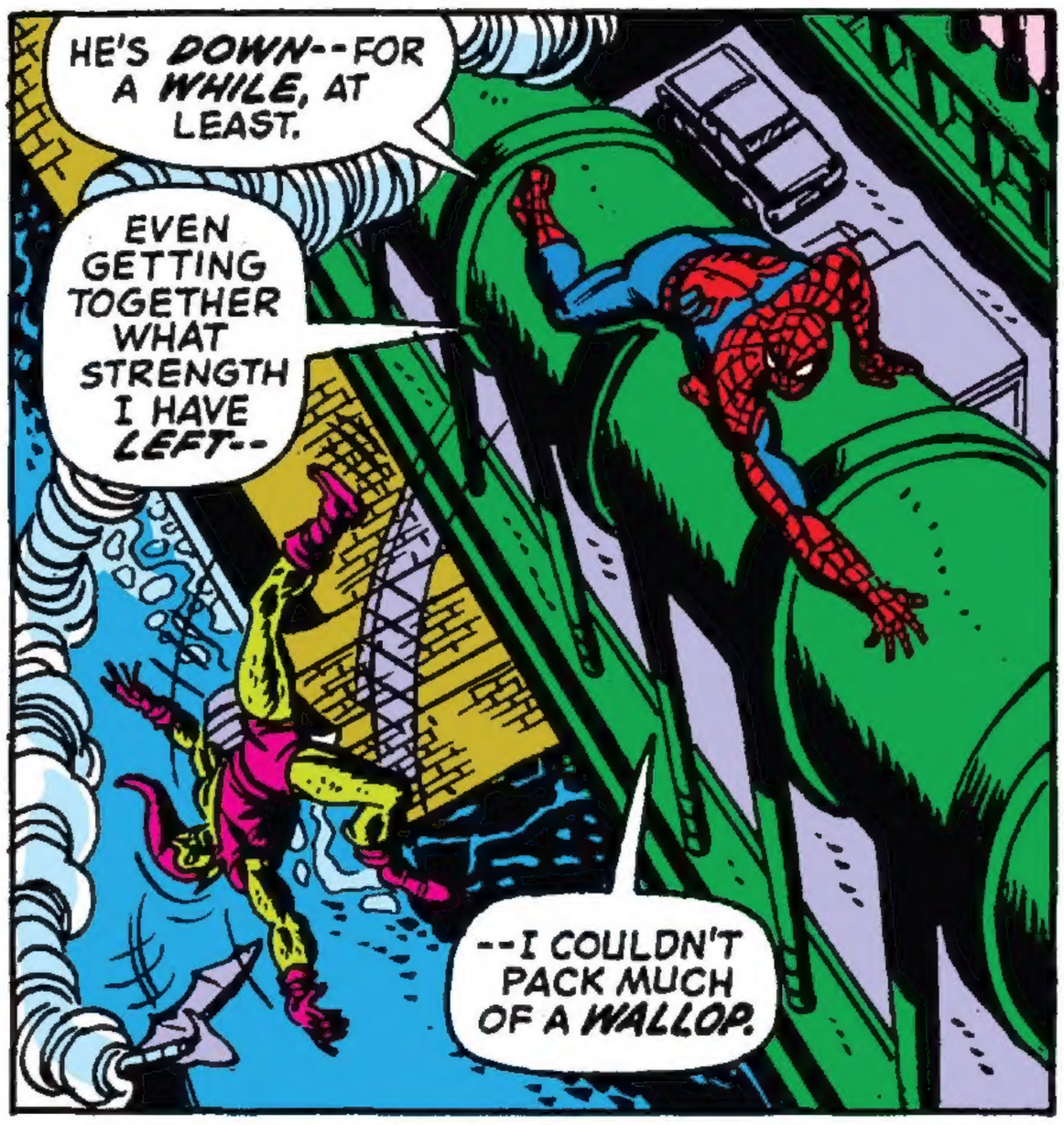

SOOOO... I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CUT THIS SHORT...
...GET MY LADY LOVE OUT OF HERE...
...AND FINISH THINGS WITH GOBBIE LATER!


BRASH FOOL!
YOUR END IS NEAR--
--WHY BE SO BLIND AS NOT TO SEE IT?

NOW! I'VE GOT TO MOVE NOW!
I MAY NOT GET ANOTHER CHANCE--
--AND FOR GWENDY'S SAKE--

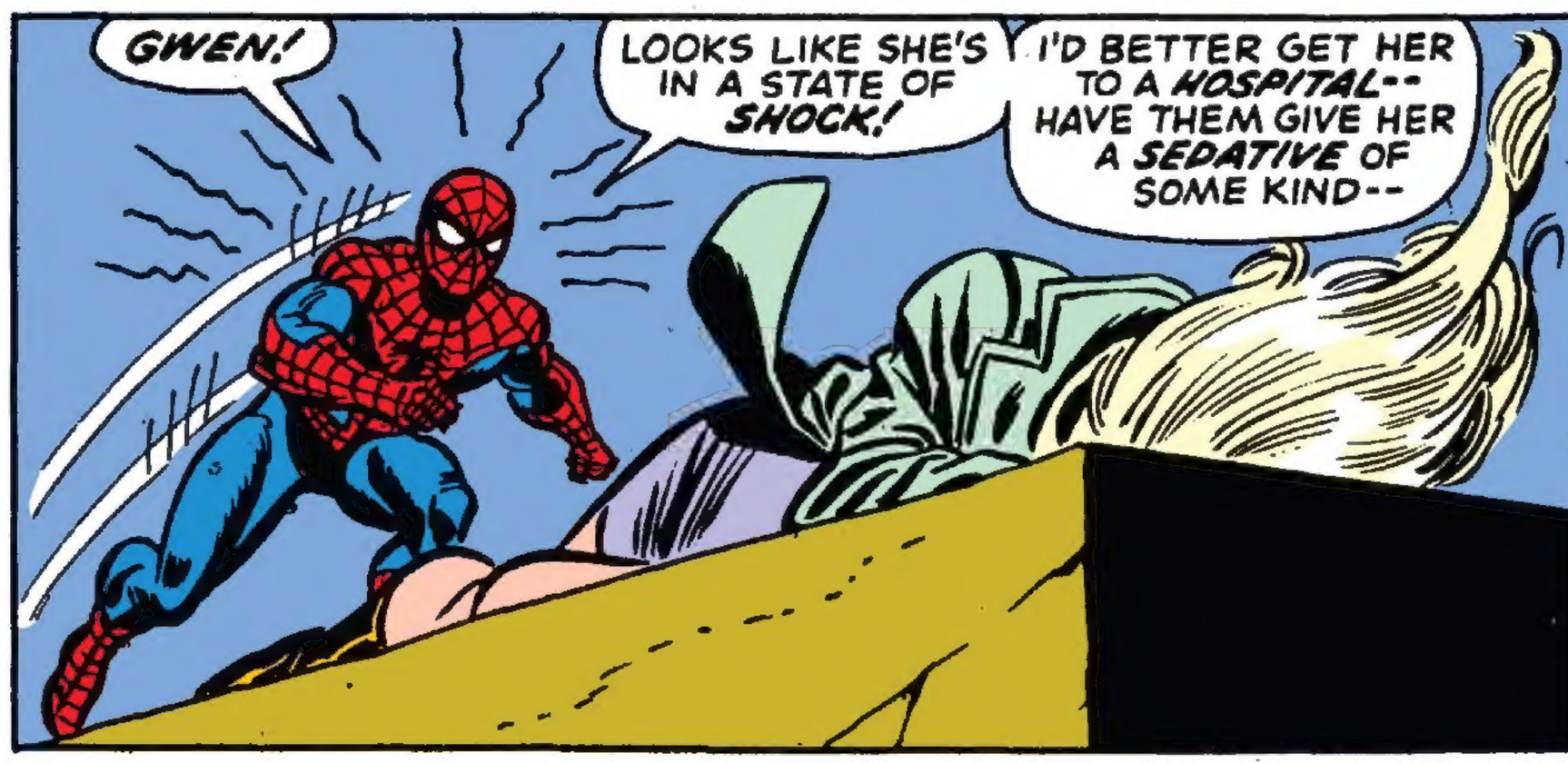

--I'VE GOT TO MAKE THIS ONE COUNT!


SPIDER-STRENGTH, IF EVER I NEEDED YOU--I NEED YOU NOW!
DON'T BUM OUT ON ME-- I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY FOR ANOTHER TRY--
--I'VE GOT TO PUT EVERYTHING INTO THIS ONE PUNCH--
YOU UNDERSTAND, SPIDER-STRENGTH?
EVERYTHING I HAVE!
WHA-KOW!


HE'S DOWN--FOR A WHILE, AT LEAST.
EVEN GETTING TOGETHER WHAT STRENGTH I HAVE LEFT--
--I COULDN'T PACK MUCH OF A WALLOP.

MY BEST BET IS TO PICK UP GWEN AND RUN.
AND THERE'S THE LADY NOW--OUT LIKE A LIGHT.
GOOD THING, TOO--IF SPIDEY'S TO SAVE HIS SECRET I.D.!

BUT, AS SPIDEY HURRIES TOWARD A JUBILANT REUNION--
--THE GREEN GOBLIN PERFORMS A REUNION OF HIS OWN, AIDED BY THE REMOTE-CONTROLLED FLYER OF HIS OWN DESIGN!


GWEN!
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S IN A STATE OF SHOCK!
I'D BETTER GET HER TO A HOSPITAL--HAVE THEM GIVE HER A SEDATIVE OF SOME KIND--

YOU CURSED INTER-LOPER!
YOU'LL NEVER TAKE THAT GIRL ANYWHERE!

SHE'S DOOMED, DO YOU HEAR ME?
WHAK
DOOMED--AND SO ARE YOU!

WHAT IF...?

MANY A PERSON IS SHAPED BY THE MEMORY OF THEIR DARKEST DAY.

FOREVER ALTERED BY A MOMENT ETCHED DEEP IN THEIR VERY MARROW.

GWEN!

COME ON...

OFTEN, THEY ARE HAUNTED BY THE CHOICES THEY MADE.

THE ACTIONS THEY DID OR DIDN'T TAKE.

GOTCHA!

IF THEY COULD DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN, TAKE A DIFFERENT PATH...

THWIP

SPIDER-POWERS, I LOVE--

...PERHAPS IT WOULD MERELY BE ANOTHER IN AN ENDLESS STRING OF CLOSE CALLS.

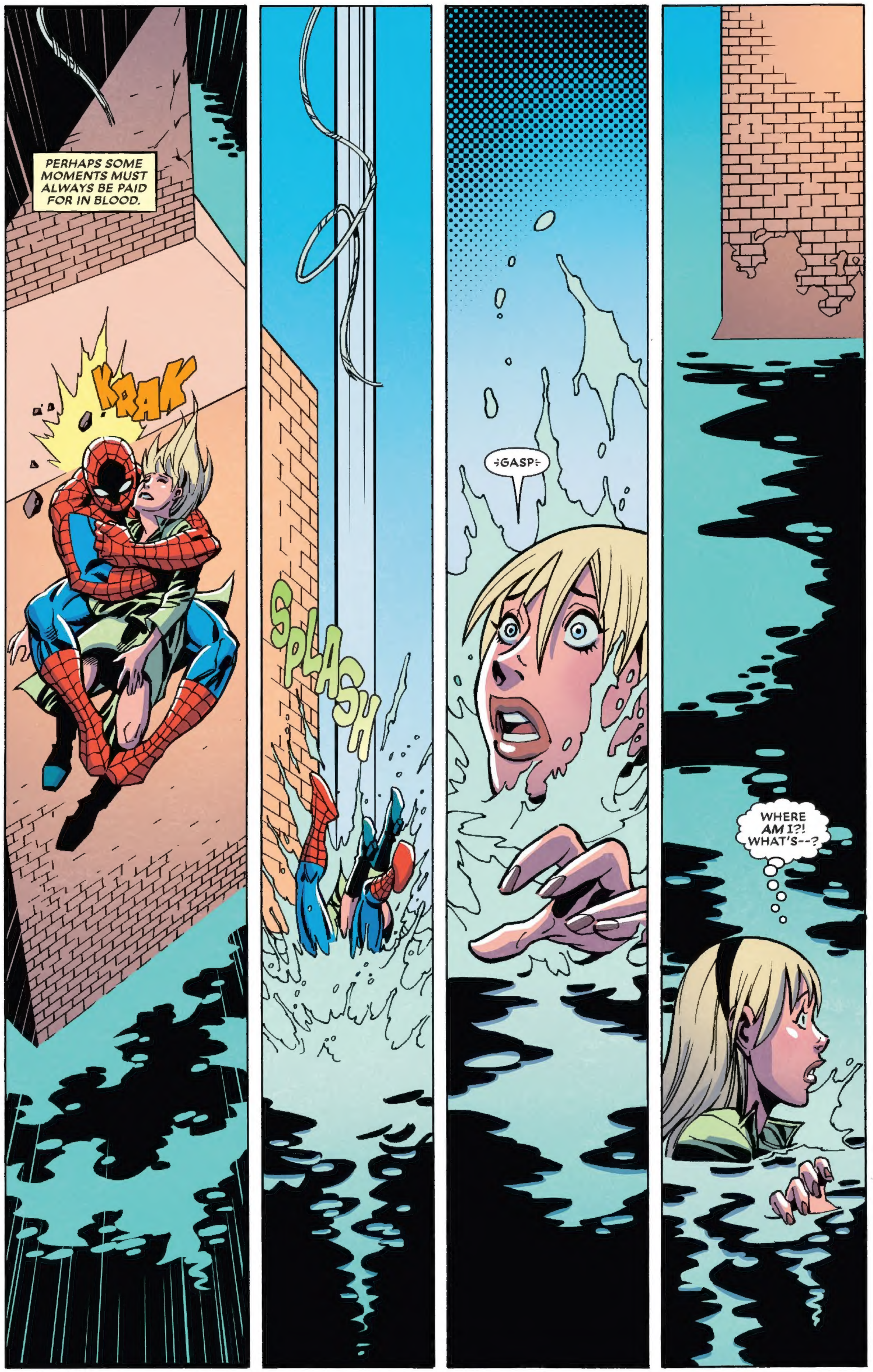
HAHAHAHA!

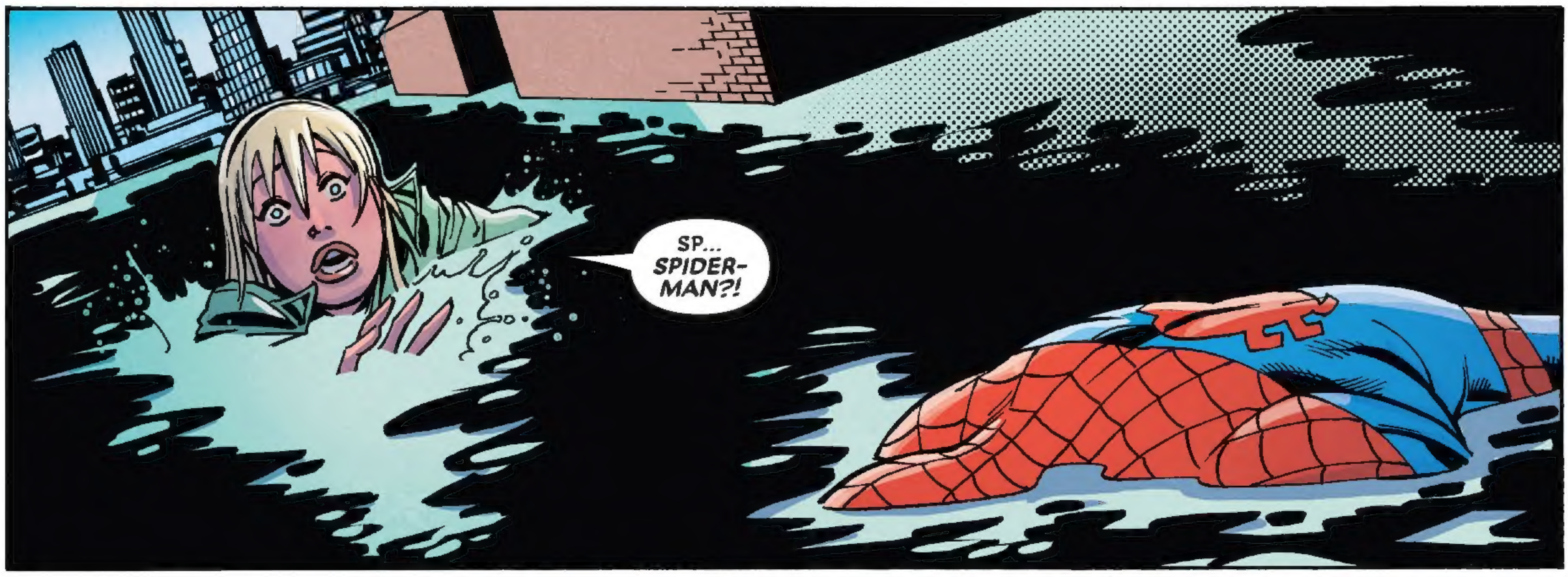
DID YOU *REALLY* THINK IT WOULD BE THAT EASY?!

SNIPP

PERHAPS NOT.

GWEN--


PERHAPS SOME MOMENTS MUST ALWAYS BE PAID FOR IN BLOOD.
KRAK
SPLASH
!
÷GASP÷
WHERE AM I?! WHAT'S--?


SP... SPIDER-MAN?!

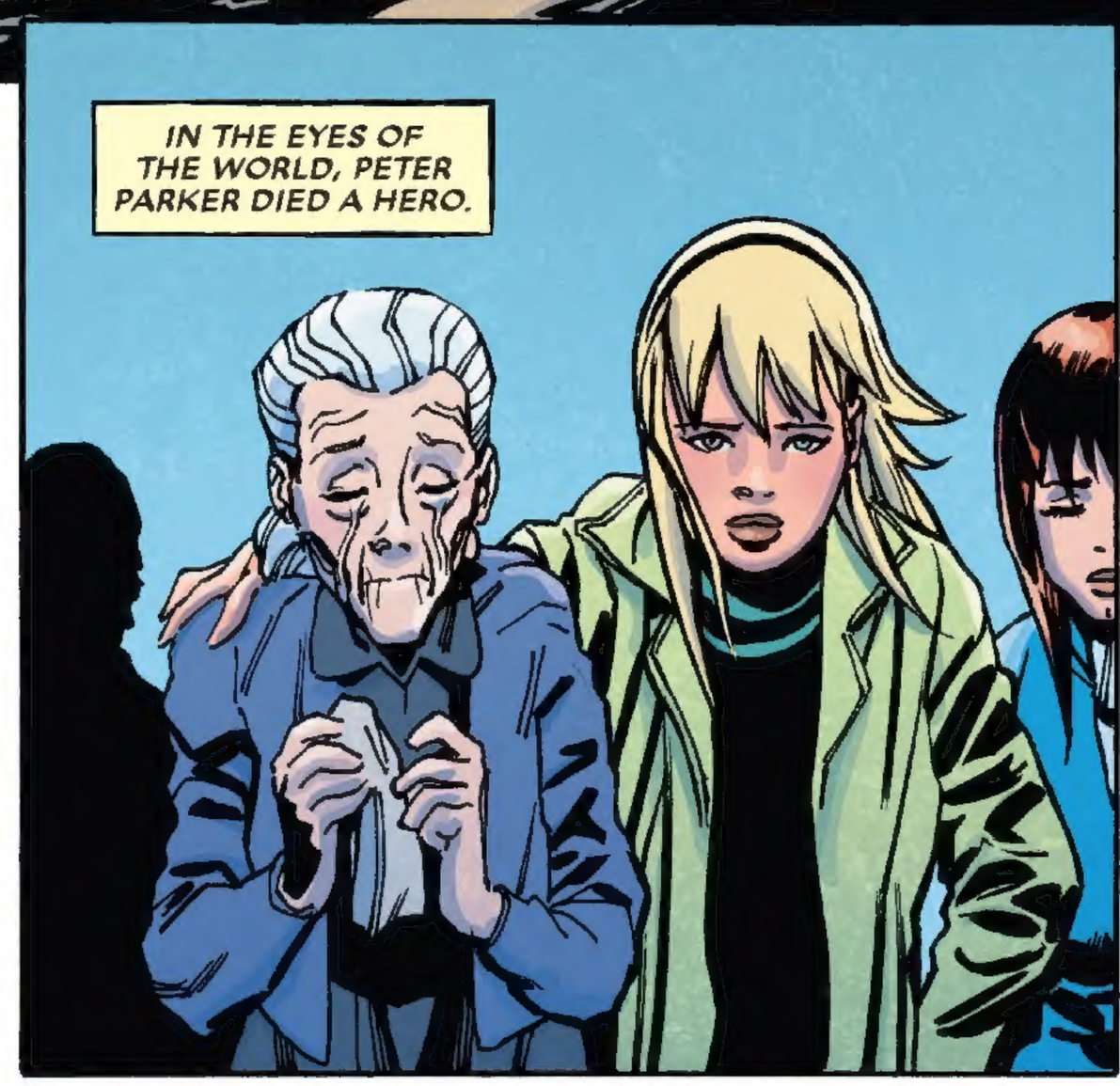
HEY... HEY! ARE YOU...?
OH NO...

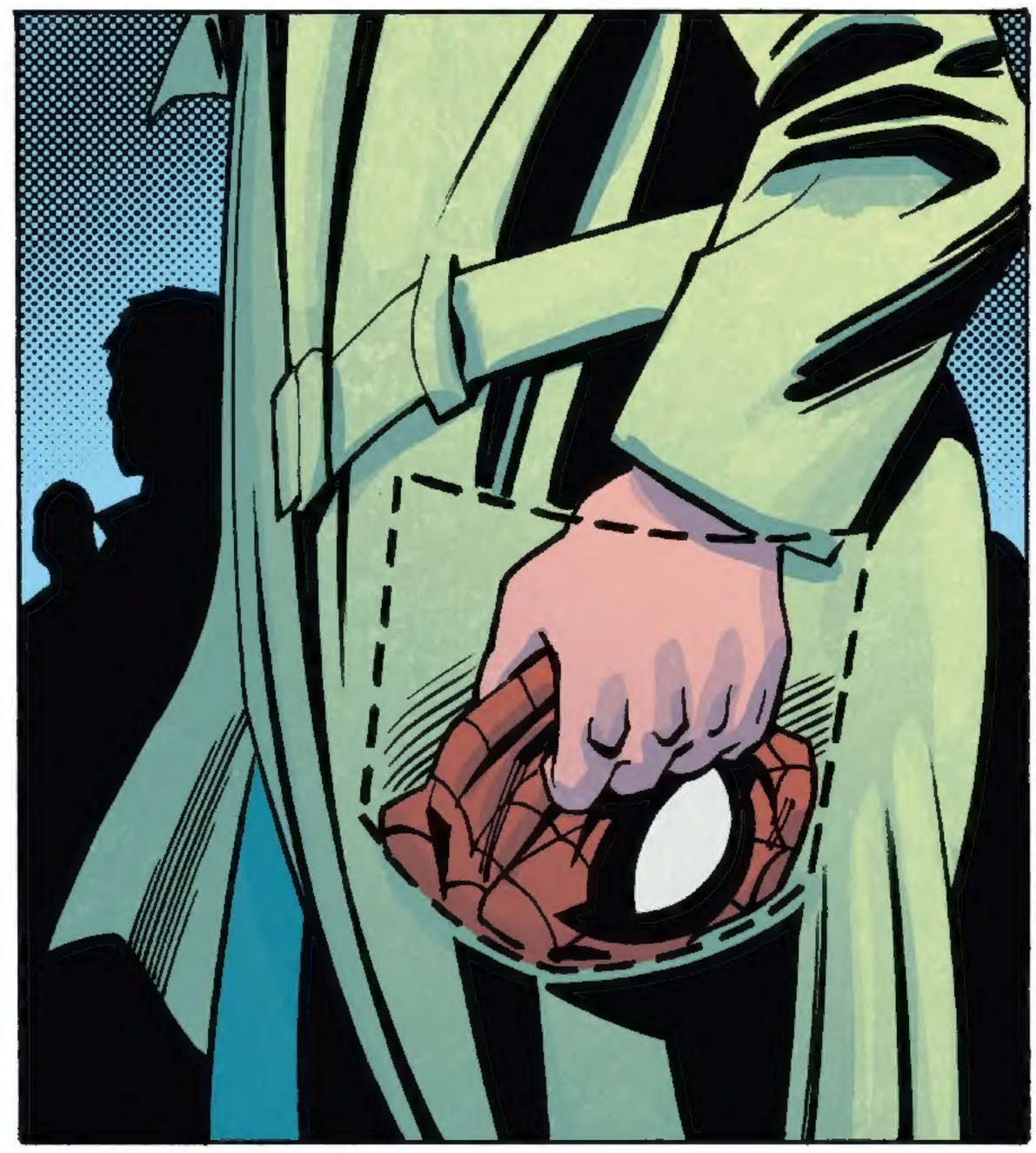
OH GOD!
PETER, NO!

OH YES, PETER!
THE FOOL SEALED HIS OWN FATE!

I'LL LET YOU LIVE...FOR NOW.
LIVE AND REMEMBER PETER PARKER'S UTTER FAILURE.

IN HER SHOCK, GWEN HAD DONE WHAT SEEMED BEST.





HECK OF A THING, SAVING YOUR LIFE.
NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED PETER HAD IT IN HIM.

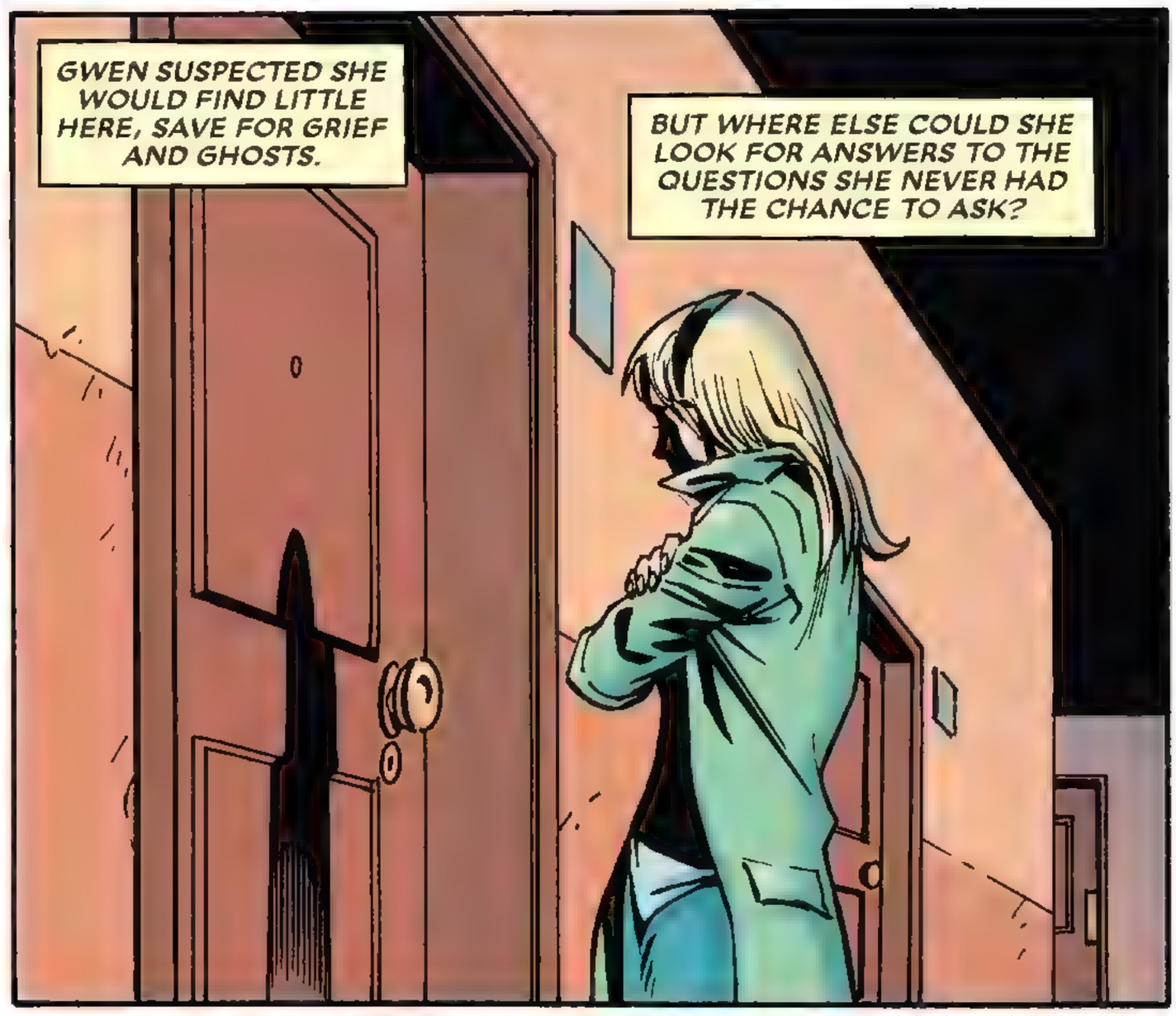
WHAT THE HELL WAS THE KID THINKING, PLAYING HERO LIKE THAT?!
I TELL YOU, ALL THOSE PICTURES OF SPIDER-MAN GOT IN HIS HEAD, AND--
JONAH! THIS ISN'T THE PLACE!

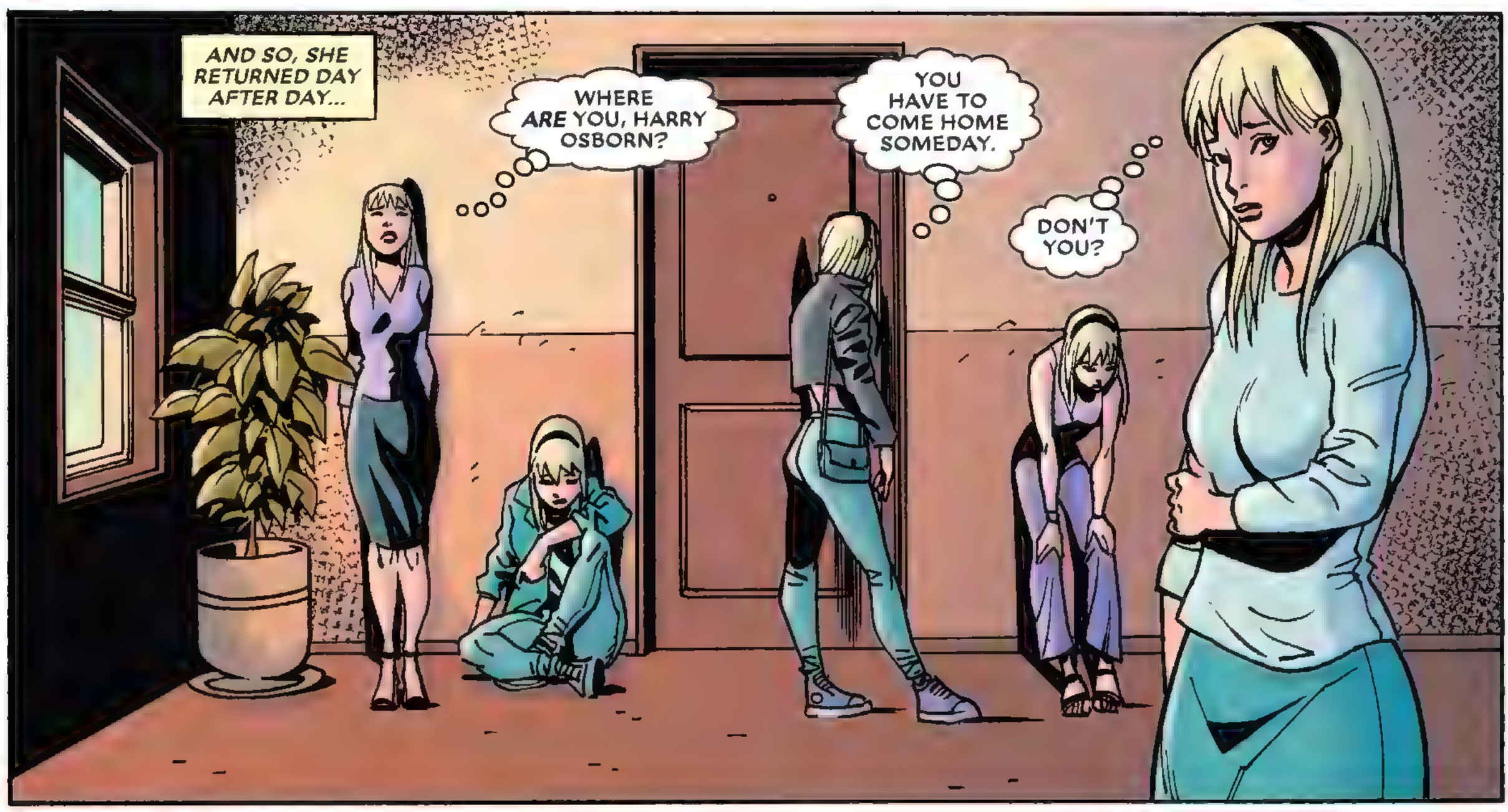
DID ANYONE KNOW WHO PETER REALLY WAS?
WAS HE REALLY CARRYING THAT ALL BY HIMSELF?

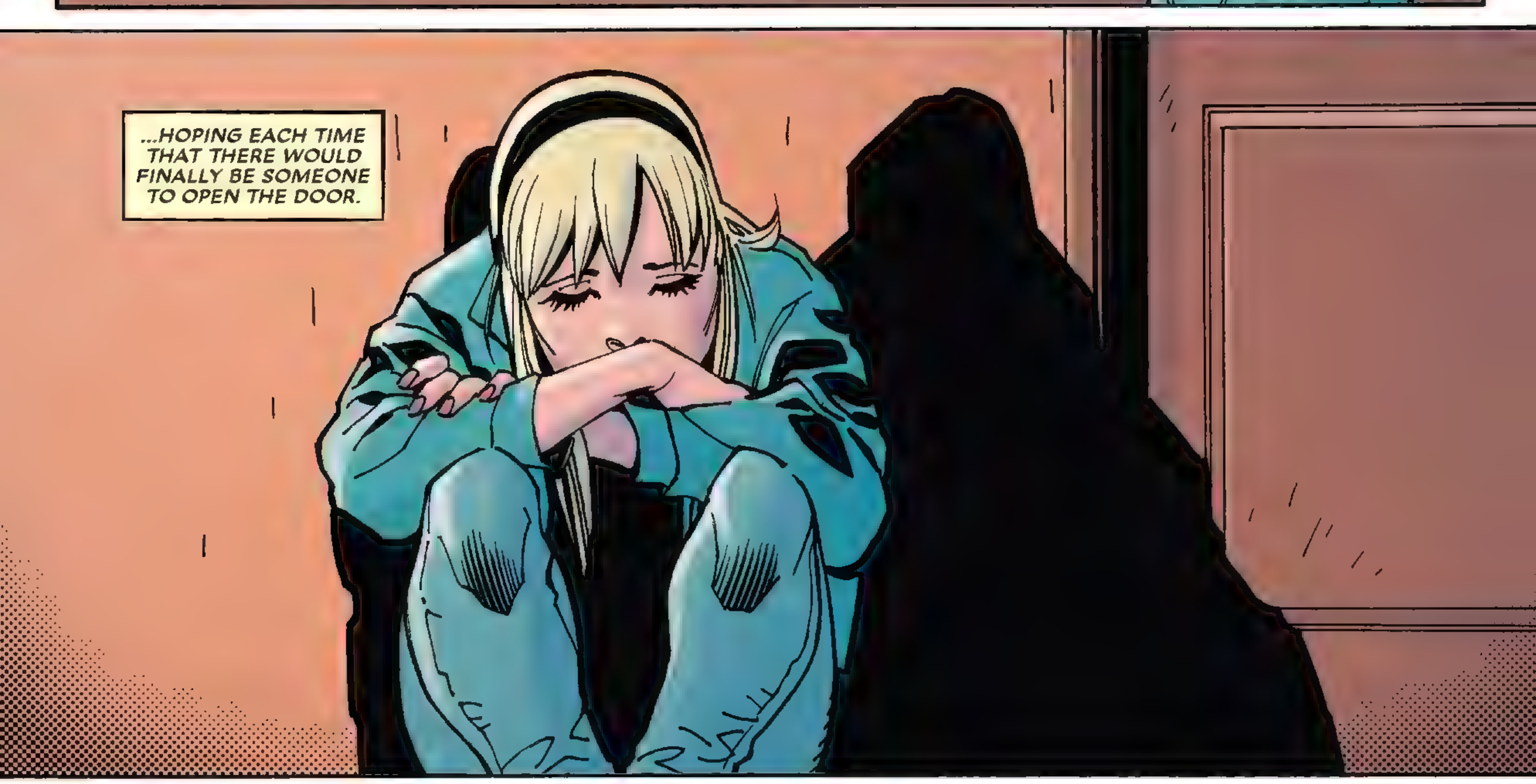
HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP, GWEN?
DO YOU WANT TO GO GRAB SOME COFFEE OR SOMETHING?

THANKS, MJ. I JUST...
I THINK I NEED TO BE ALONE RIGHT NOW.

THE FORMER RESIDENCE OF ONE PETER PARKER, A.K.A. SPIDER-MAN.

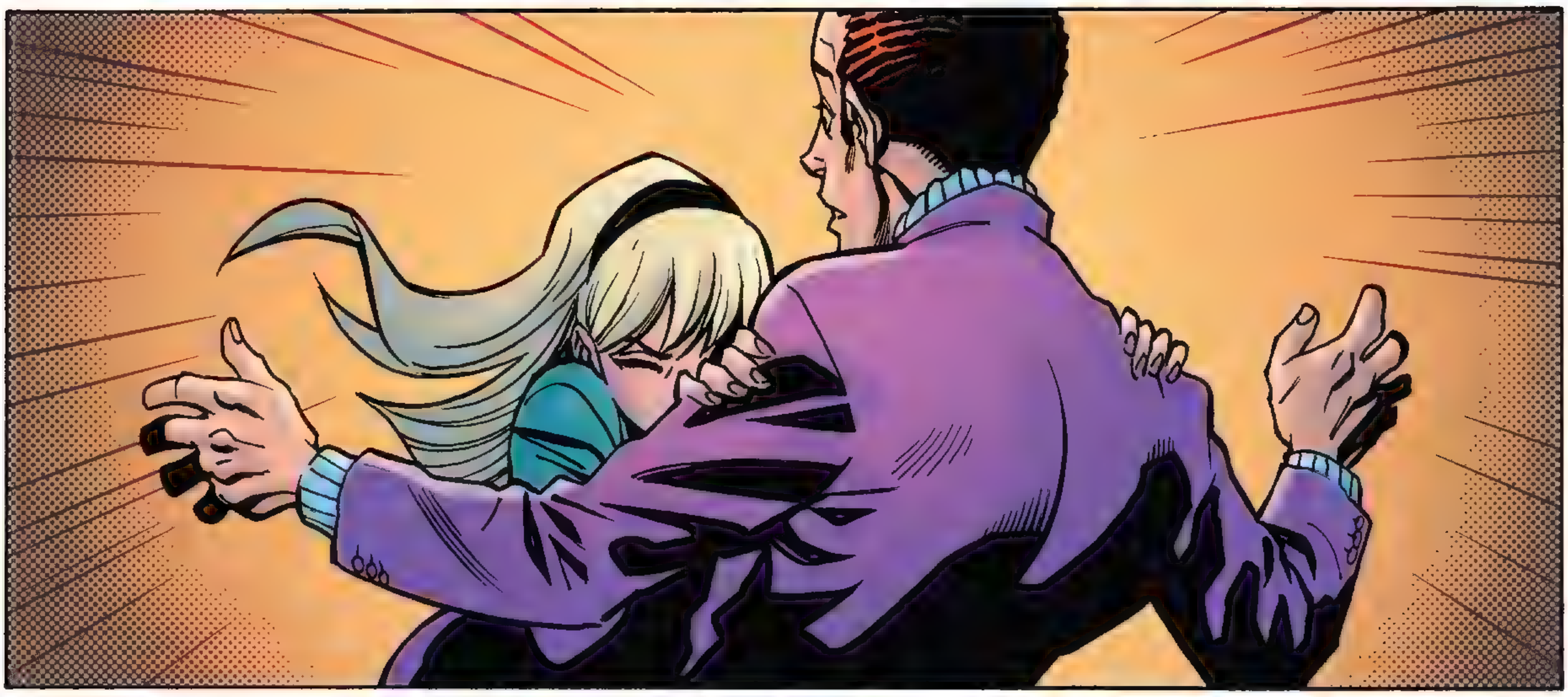

GWEN SUSPECTED SHE WOULD FIND LITTLE HERE, SAVE FOR GRIEF AND GHOSTS.
BUT WHERE ELSE COULD SHE LOOK FOR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS SHE NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO ASK?

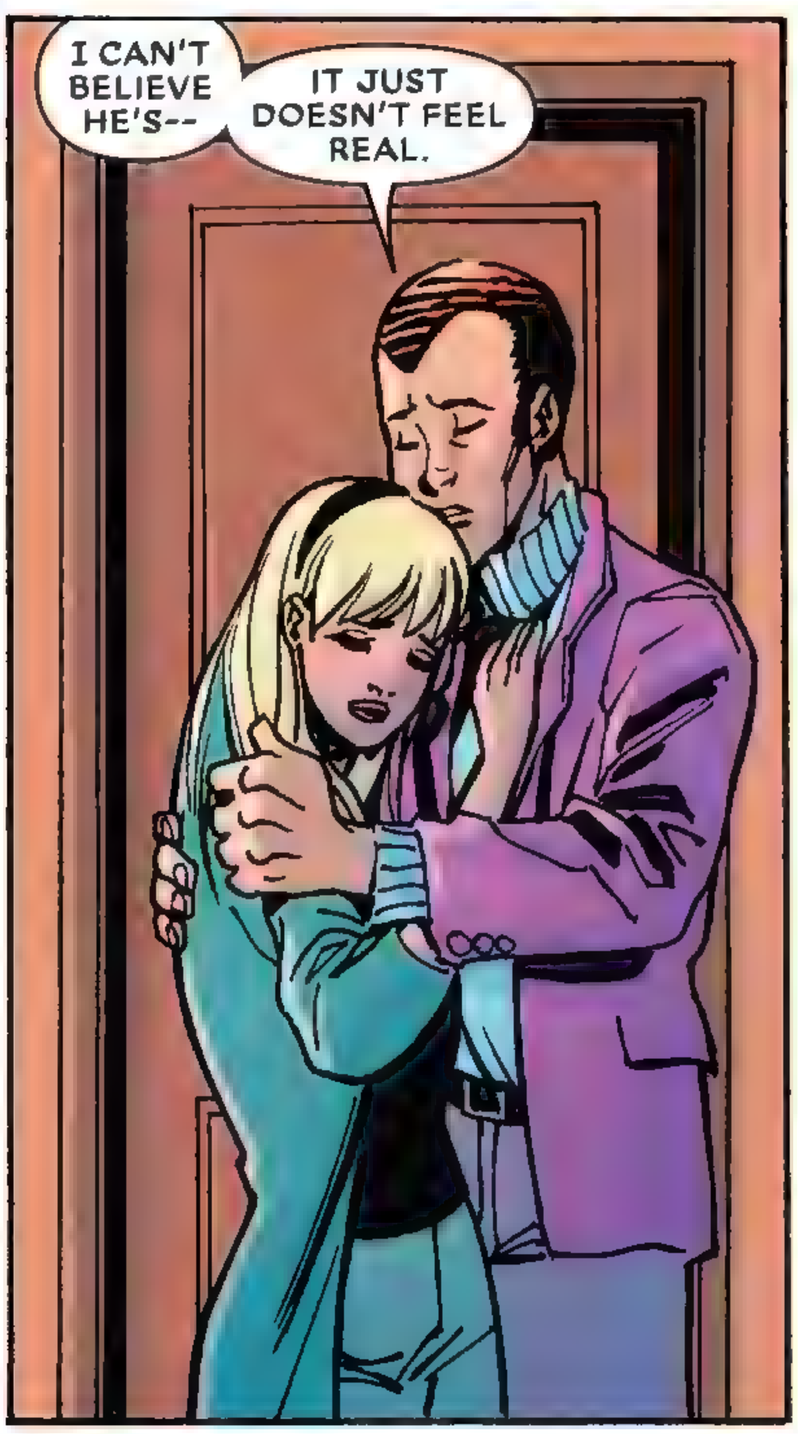

AND SO, SHE RETURNED DAY AFTER DAY...
WHERE ARE YOU, HARRY OSBORN?
YOU HAVE TO COME HOME SOMEDAY.
DON'T YOU?


...HOPING EACH TIME THAT THERE WOULD FINALLY BE SOMEONE TO OPEN THE DOOR.

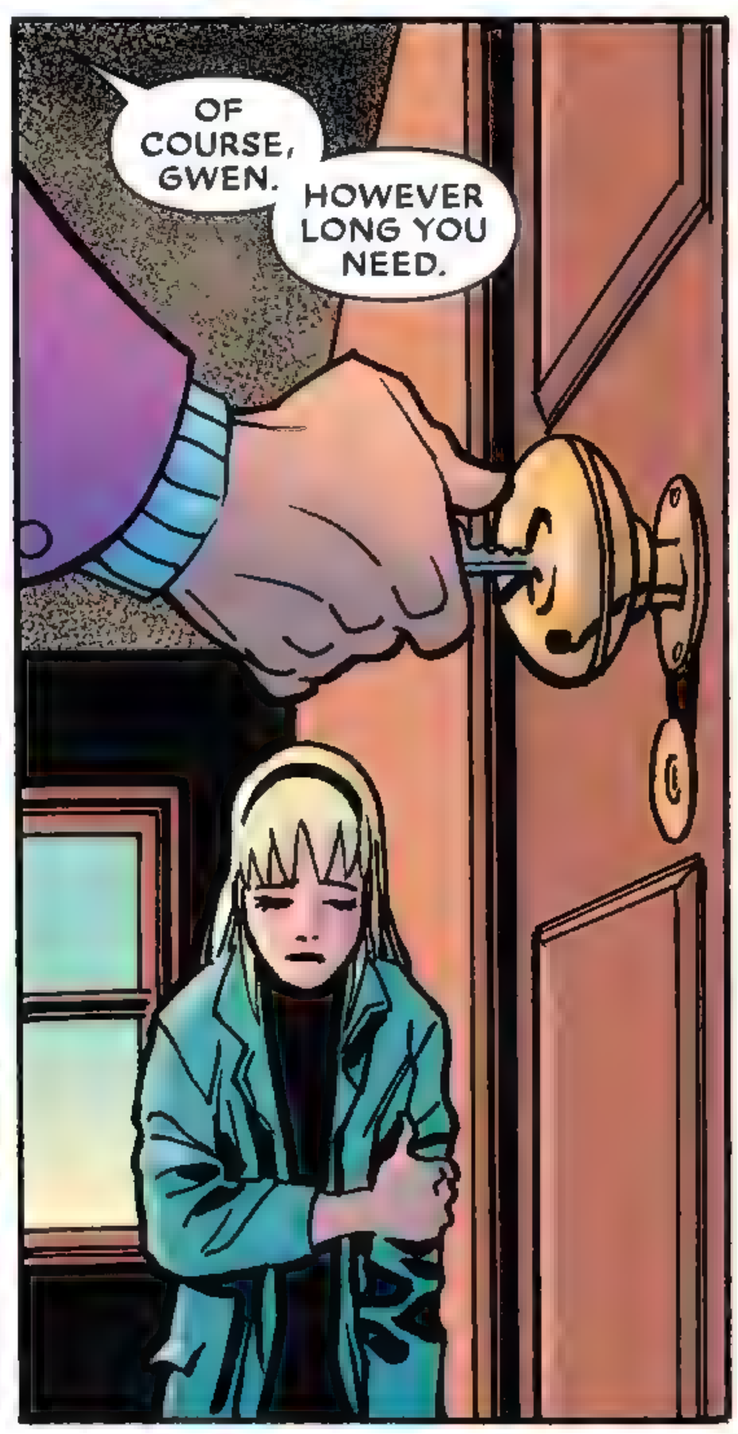
...GWEN?
HARRY.

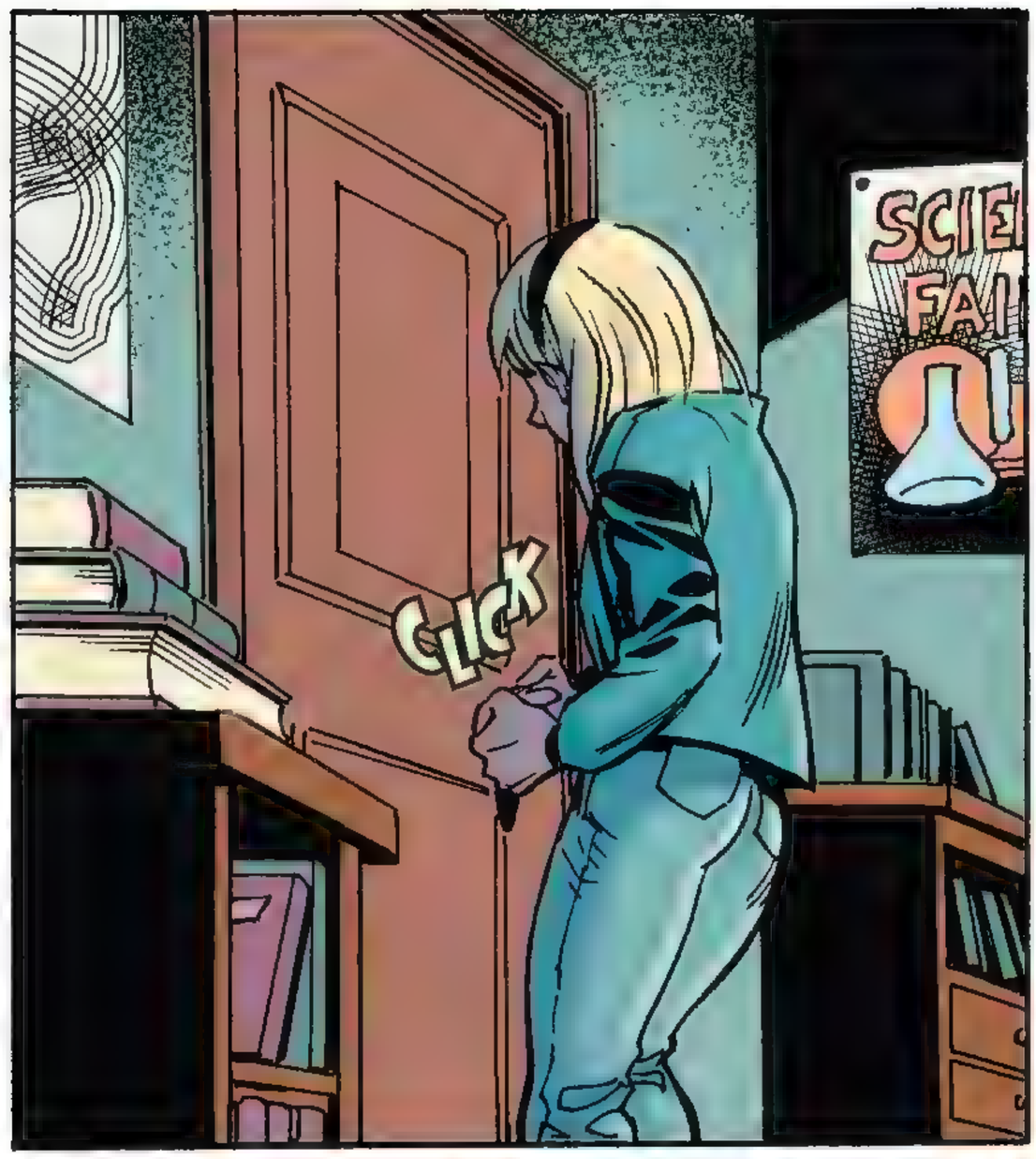
I'M SORRY I...
...THAT I WASN'T...




I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S--
IT JUST DOESN'T FEEL REAL.

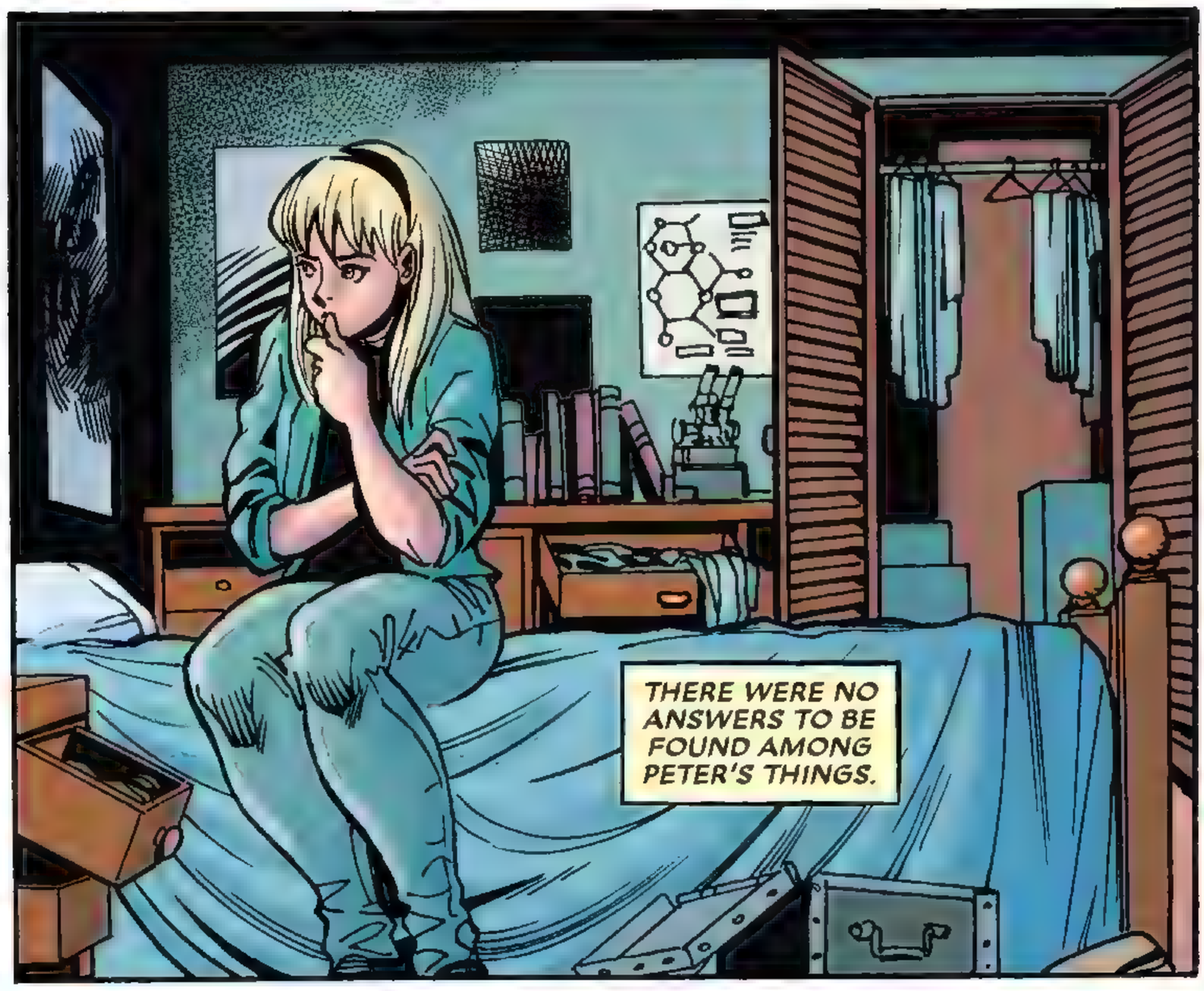
COULD I...?
I'D LIKE TO SIT IN HIS ROOM FOR A WHILE. IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

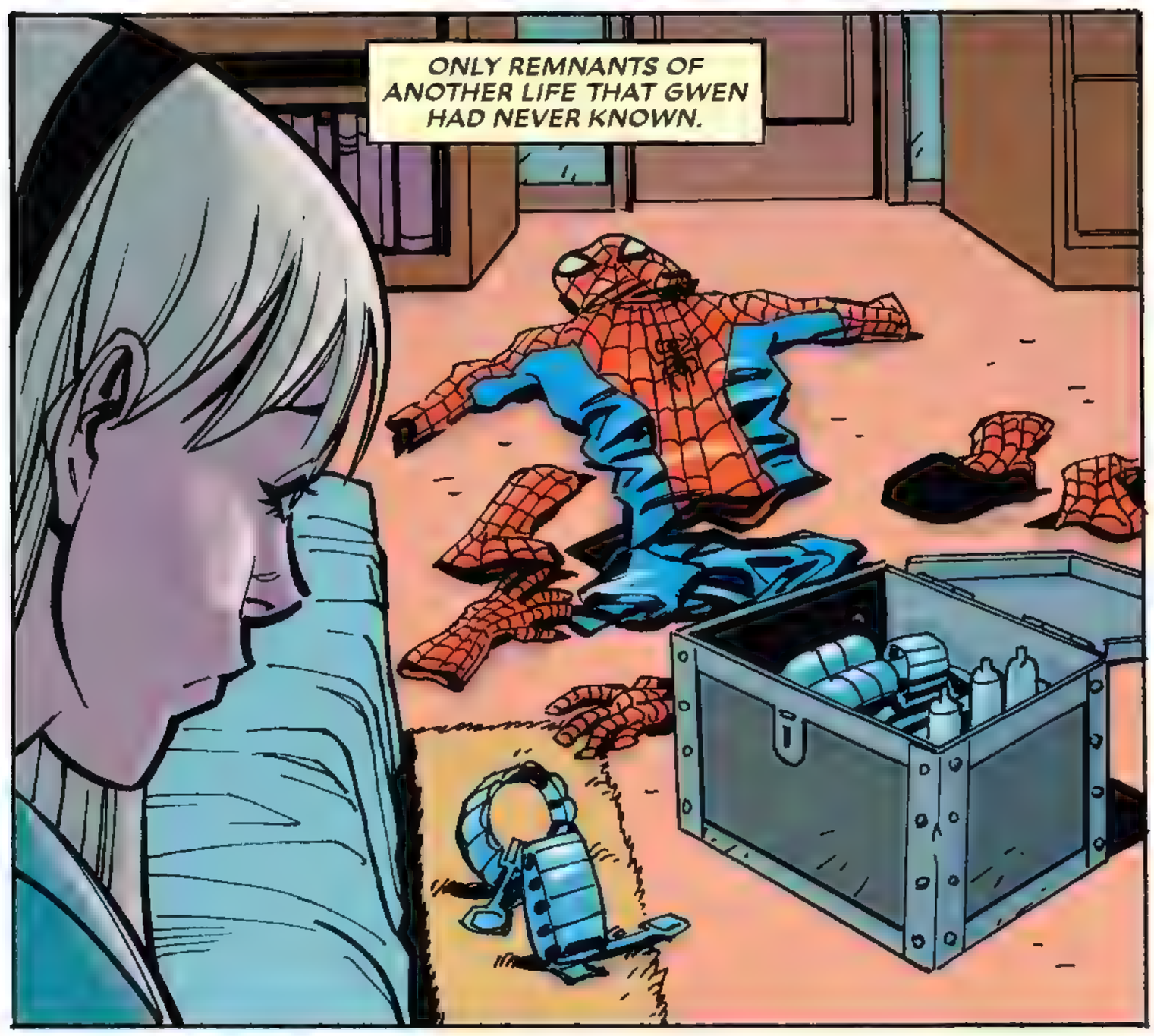

OF COURSE, GWEN.
HOWEVER LONG YOU NEED.


CLICK

IT FEELS SO EMPTY...

COME ON. GET IT TOGETHER.

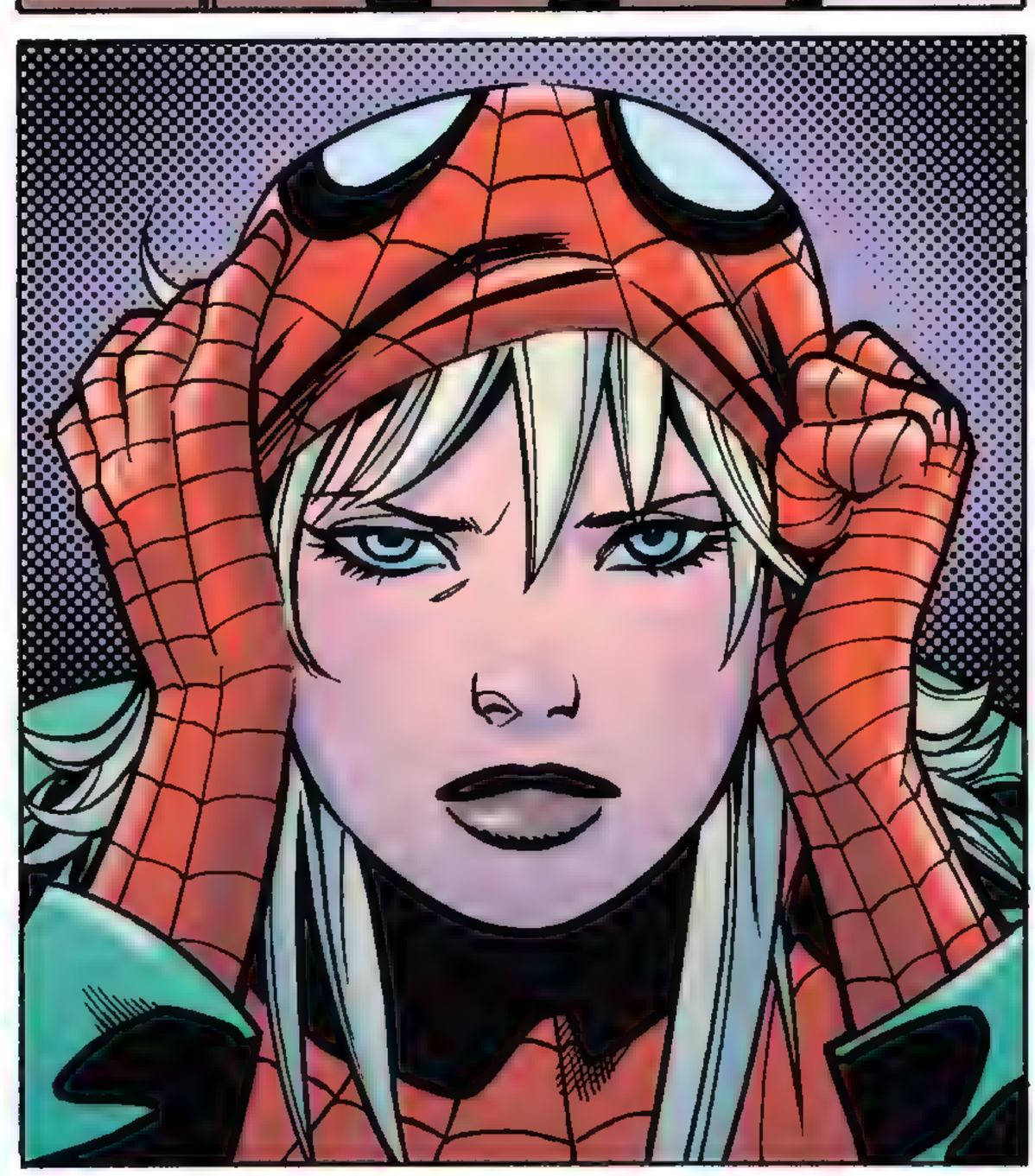

THERE WERE NO ANSWERS TO BE FOUND AMONG PETER'S THINGS.


ONLY REMNANTS OF ANOTHER LIFE THAT GWEN HAD NEVER KNOWN.

A LIFE THAT HAD BEEN STOLEN RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER.

MAYBE IT WASN'T ANSWERS SHE'D BEEN LOOKING FOR, AFTER ALL.

NO... NO...
HMM, MAYBE...

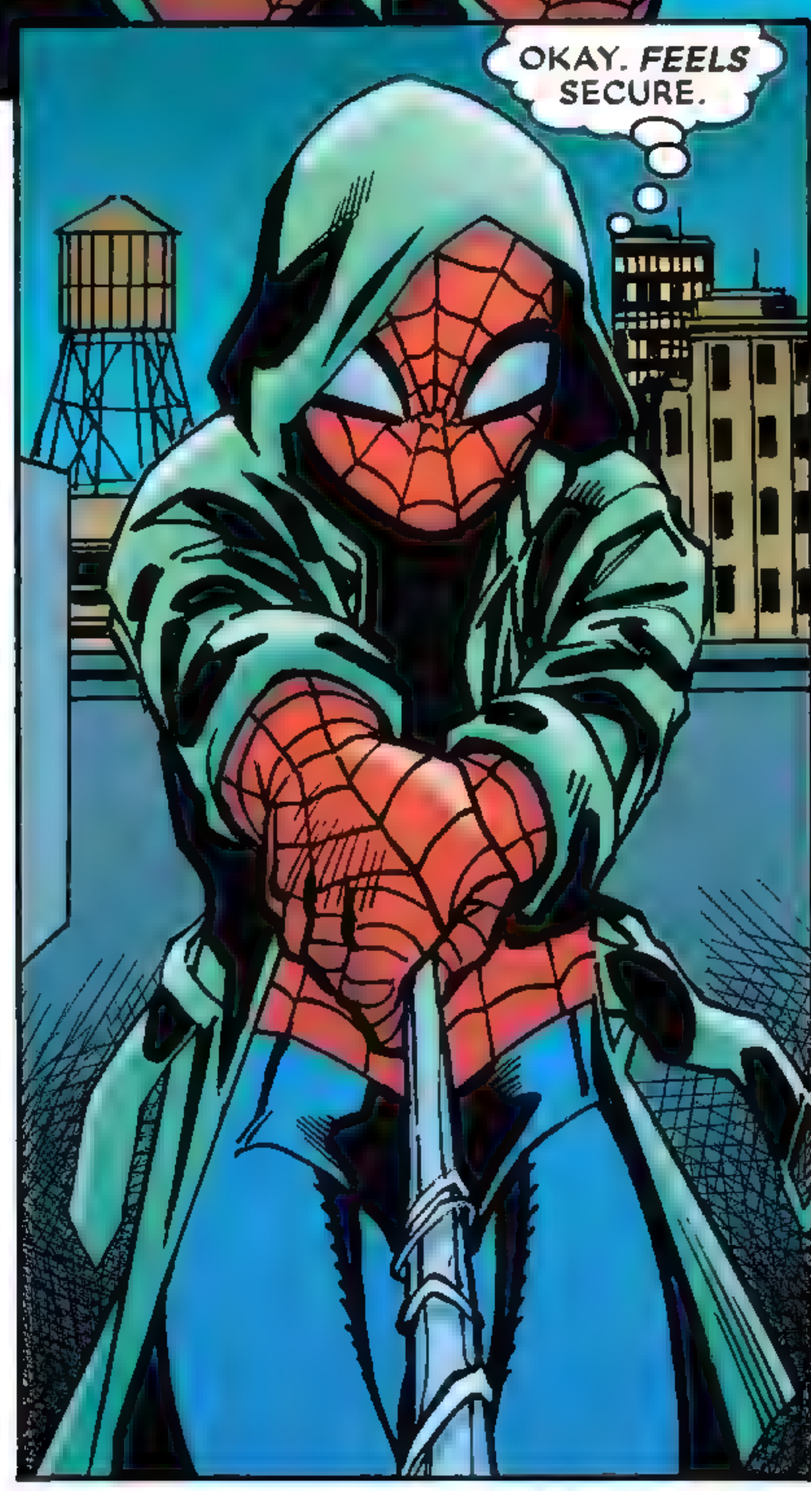


OKAY, GWEN...
...NOW WHAT?

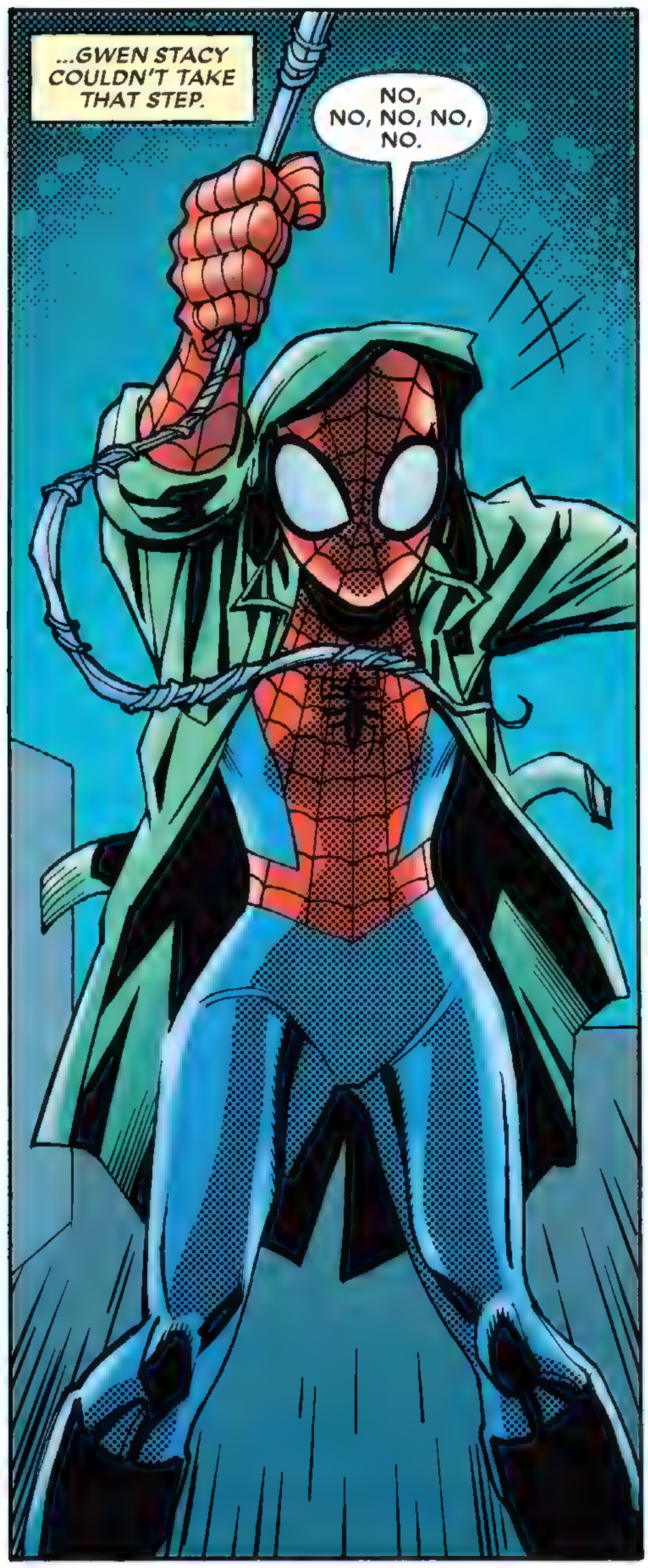
OKAY. THIS CAN'T BE *TOO* HARD.
RIGHT?

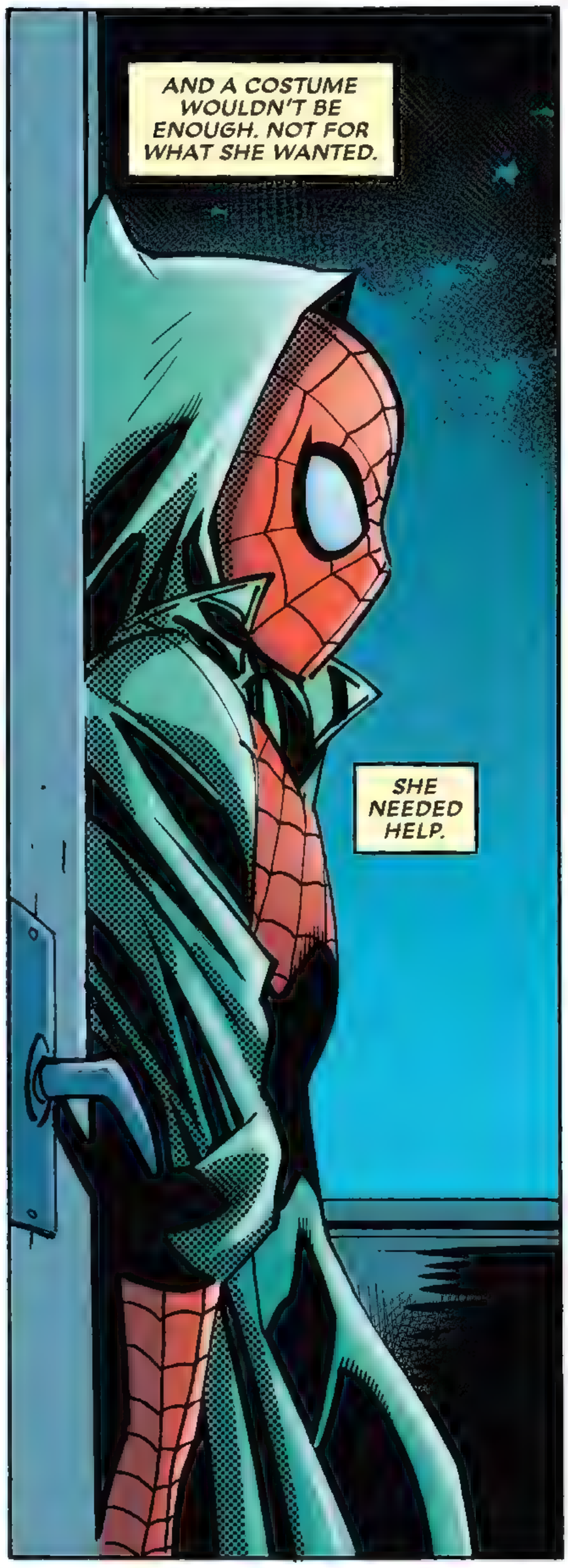
THE MECHANISM LOOKS SIMPLE ENO--

GAH!
THWIP

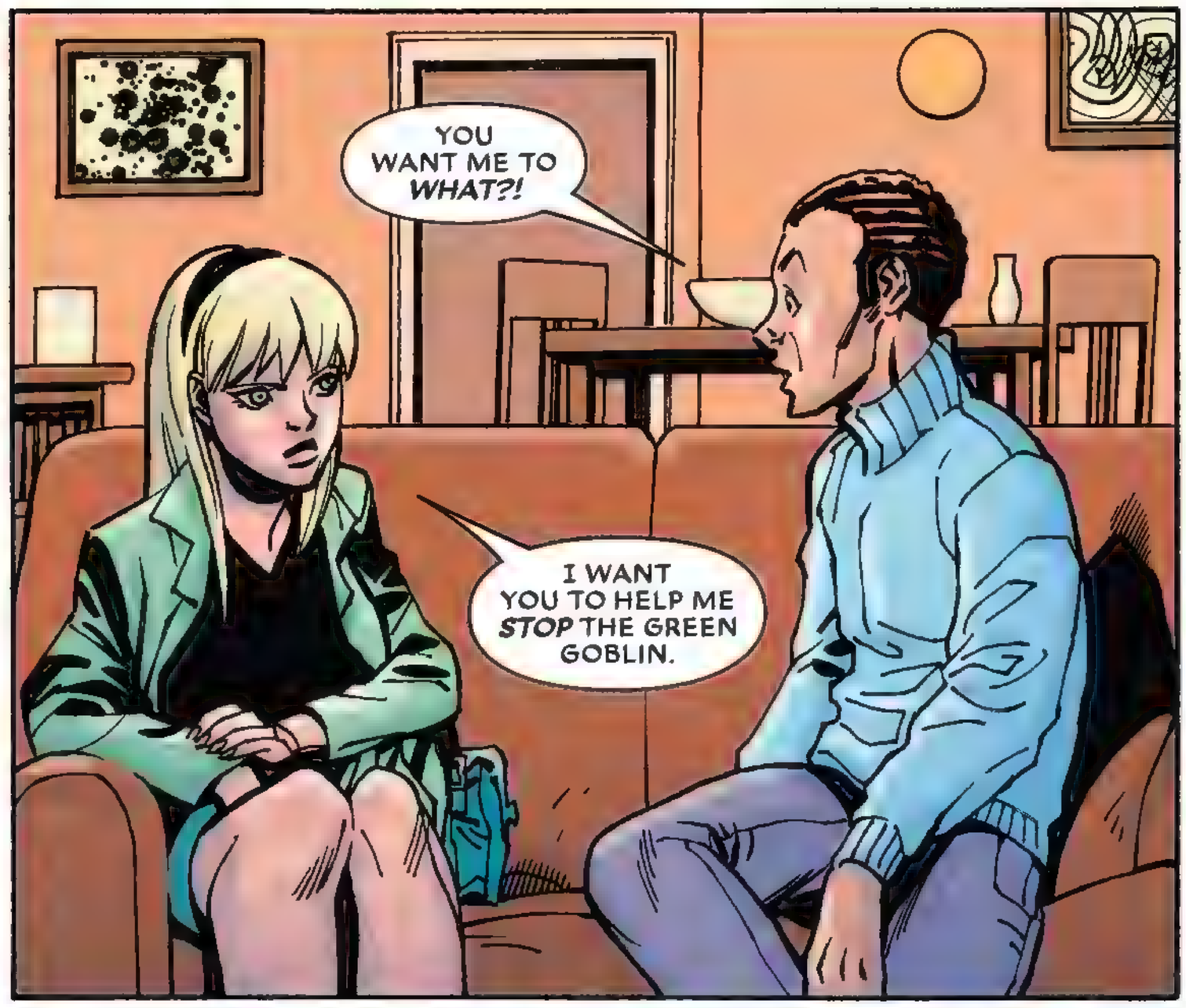

OKAY. *FEELS* SECURE.

AS THE COLD WIND WHIPPED AROUND HER, ONE TRUTH RANG CRYSTAL CLEAR IN THAT MOMENT...





AND WHO BETTER TO TURN TO THAN A FRIEND WHO WAS AS HEARTSICK AS SHE WAS?


YOU WANT ME TO WHAT?!
I WANT YOU TO HELP ME STOP THE GREEN GOBLIN.

GWEN, I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT--
DON'T YOU WANT TO MAKE HIM PAY?!

YOU THINK I WOULDN'T WRING THE LIFE OUT OF THAT MONSTER WITH MY BARE HANDS IF I HAD THE CHANCE?
PETER WAS MY BEST FRIEND.

BUT WE'RE JUST TWO NORMAL COLLEGE KIDS. THIS IS WAY OUT OF OUR LEAGUE.
LEAVE IT TO THE POLICE OR SPIDER-MAN--
SPIDER-MAN IS DEAD, HARRY.

PETER WAS SPIDER-MAN.

...

HOW...?

HE... HE NEVER TOLD ME.

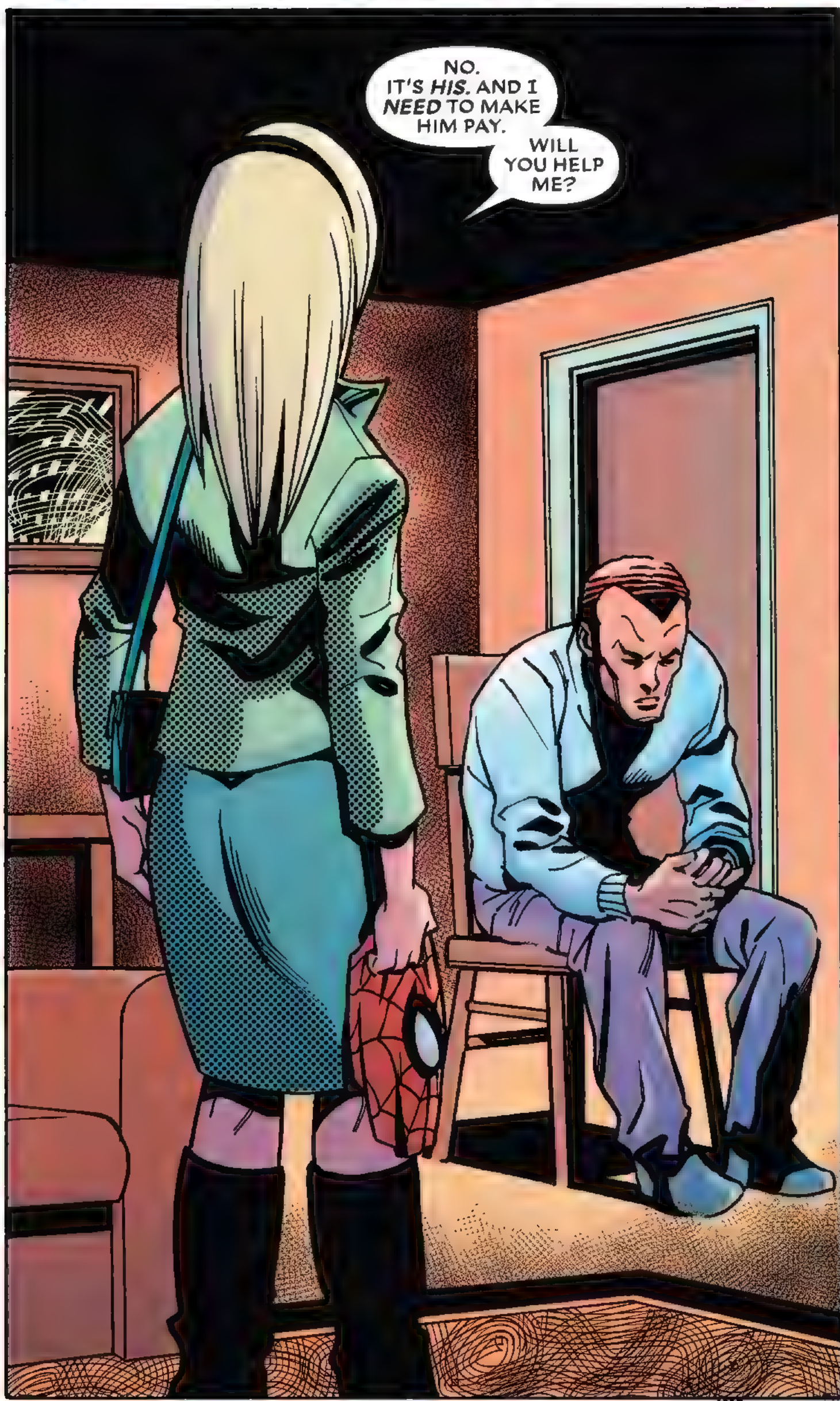
I DIDN'T KNOW EITHER.

NOT UNTIL--

BUT HE KNEW. THE GOBLIN.

HE *KNEW* WHO PETER WAS. HE KNEW HE COULD USE *ME* TO HURT PETER.
AND THAT'S *EXACTLY* WHAT HE DID.

YOU CAN'T BLAME *YOURSELF* FOR WHAT HAPPENED, GWEN.
IT'S NOT *YOUR FAULT.*


NO. IT'S *HIS.* AND I *NEED* TO MAKE HIM PAY.
WILL YOU HELP ME?

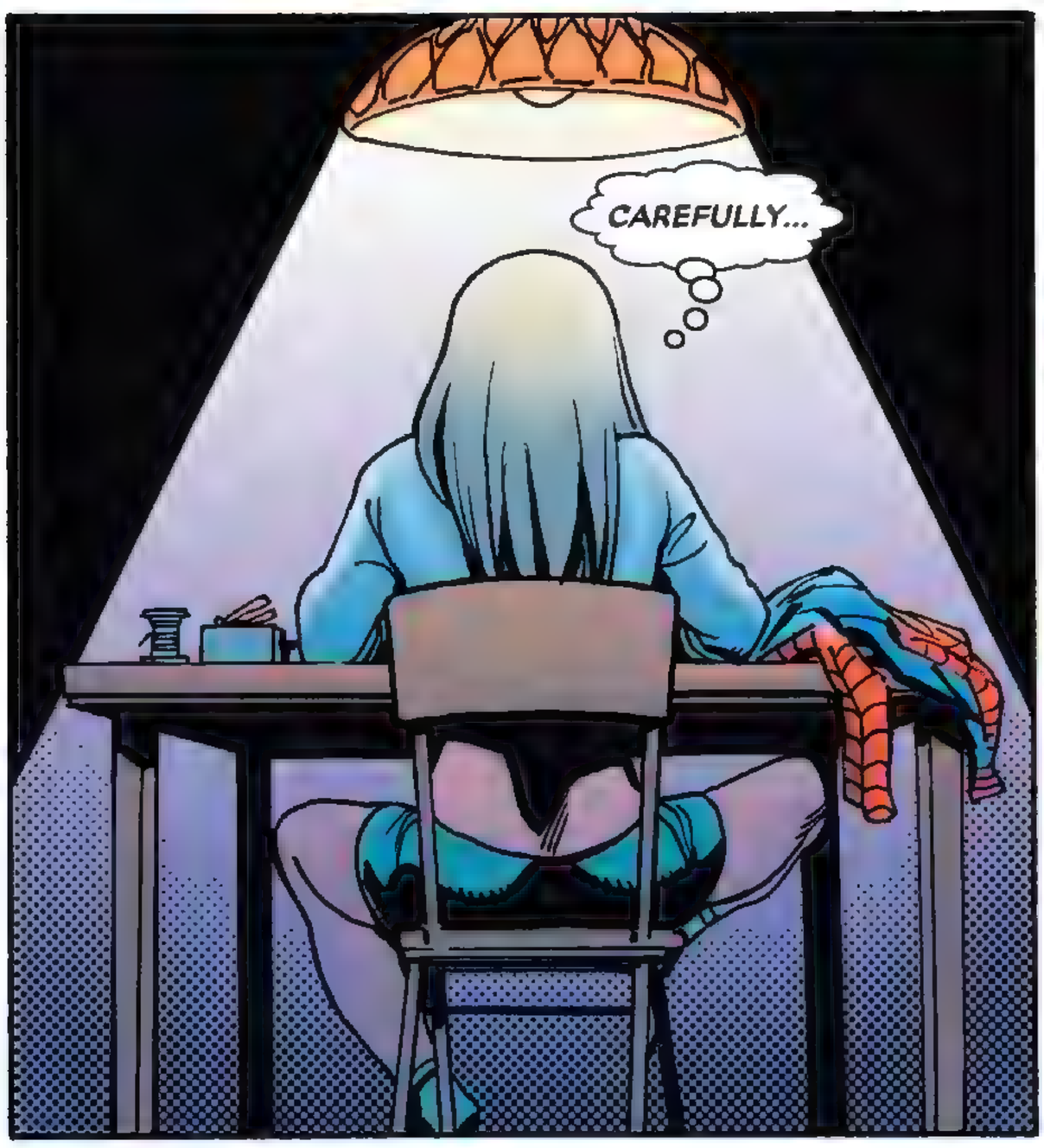
...WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?

AND SO, A PLAN BEGAN TO FORM. BUILT OFF THE GENIUS OF THEIR LOST FRIEND.
I THINK THIS WILL WORK.
IF YOU SAY SO...

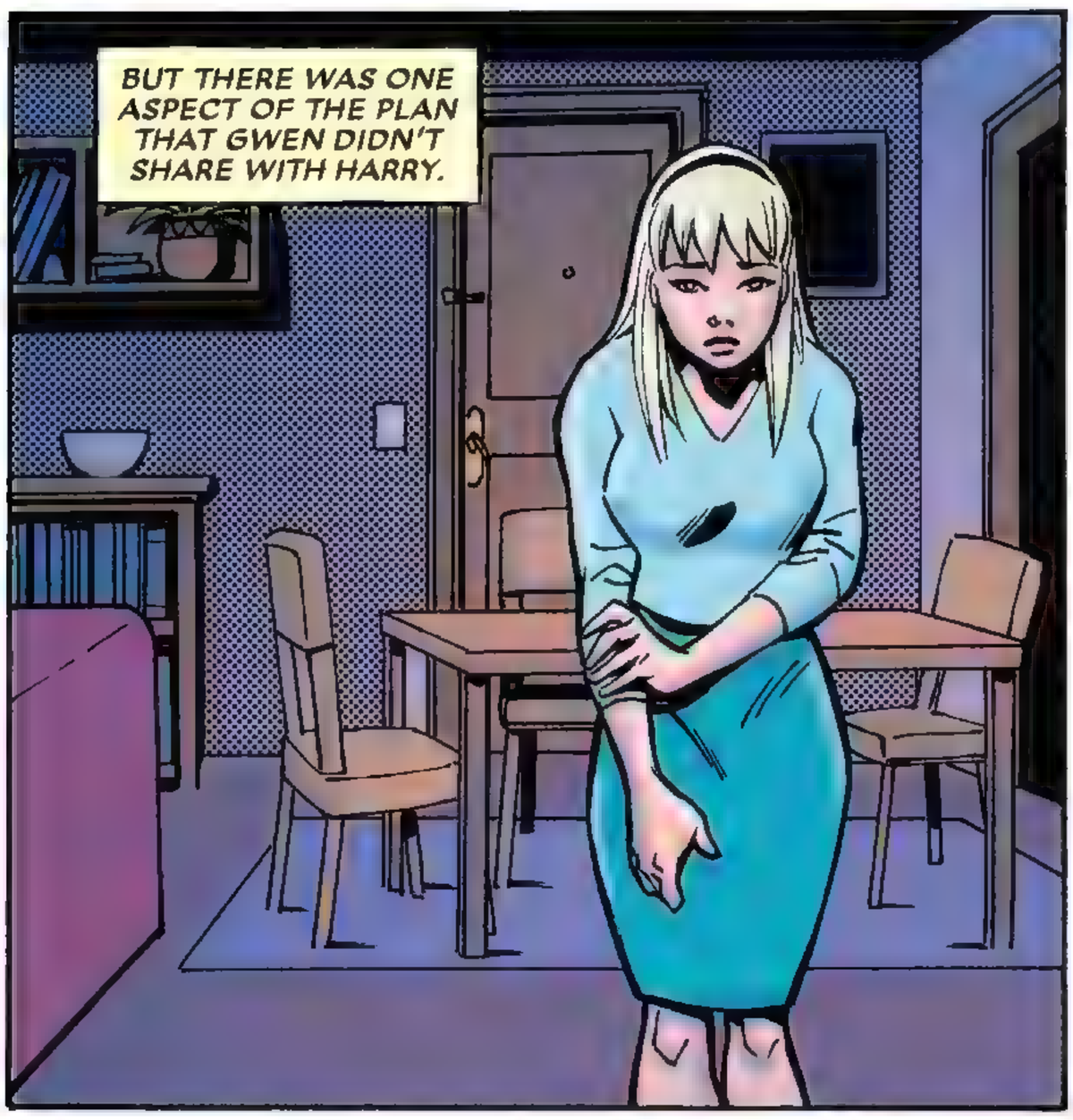
FORGED IN THEIR SHARED SORROW AND RAGE.
HERE?
TOO MUCH FOOT TRAFFIC, EVEN AT NIGHT.

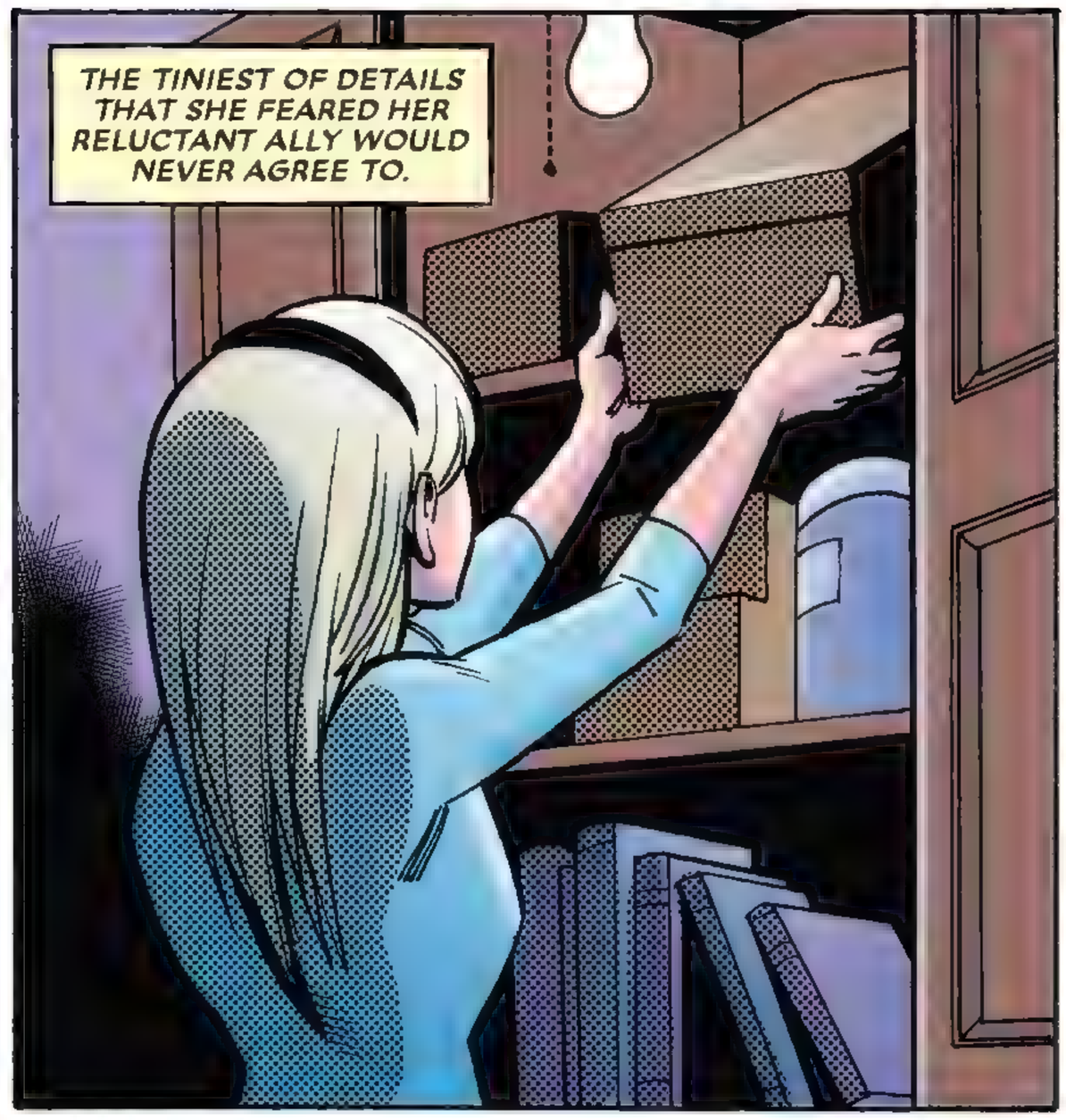
THE THEATER DEPARTMENT WAS ABOUT TO THROW THIS STUFF OUT. THEY WON'T MISS IT.
THANKS, MJ. YOU'RE A LIFESAVER.

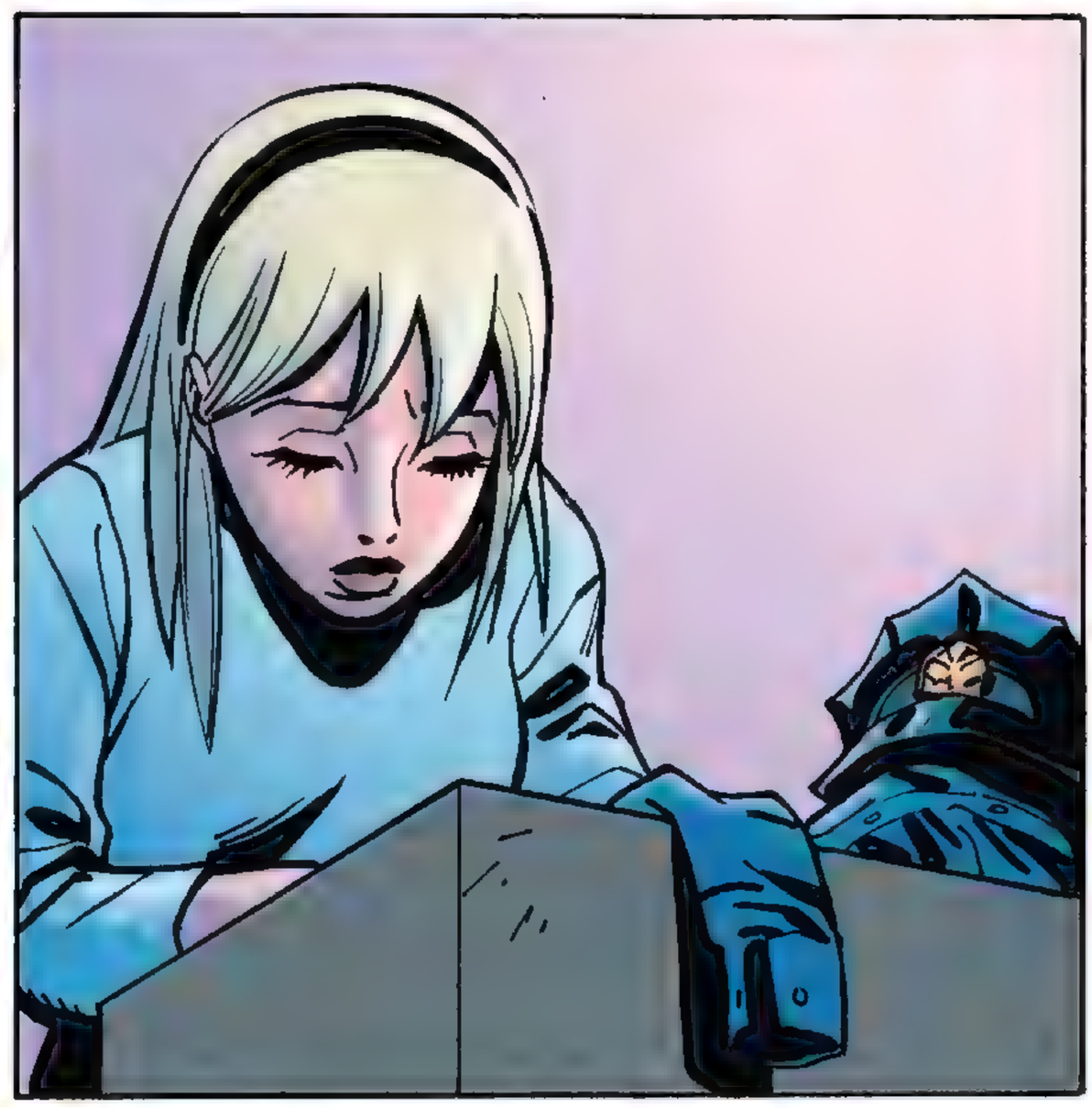
YOU KNOW, IF YOU'RE UP FOR A COSTUME PARTY, I HOPE YOU'LL BE UP FOR THAT COFFEE DATE SOON.
I'VE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT YOU, GWEN.
I KNOW. SOON. I PROMISE.

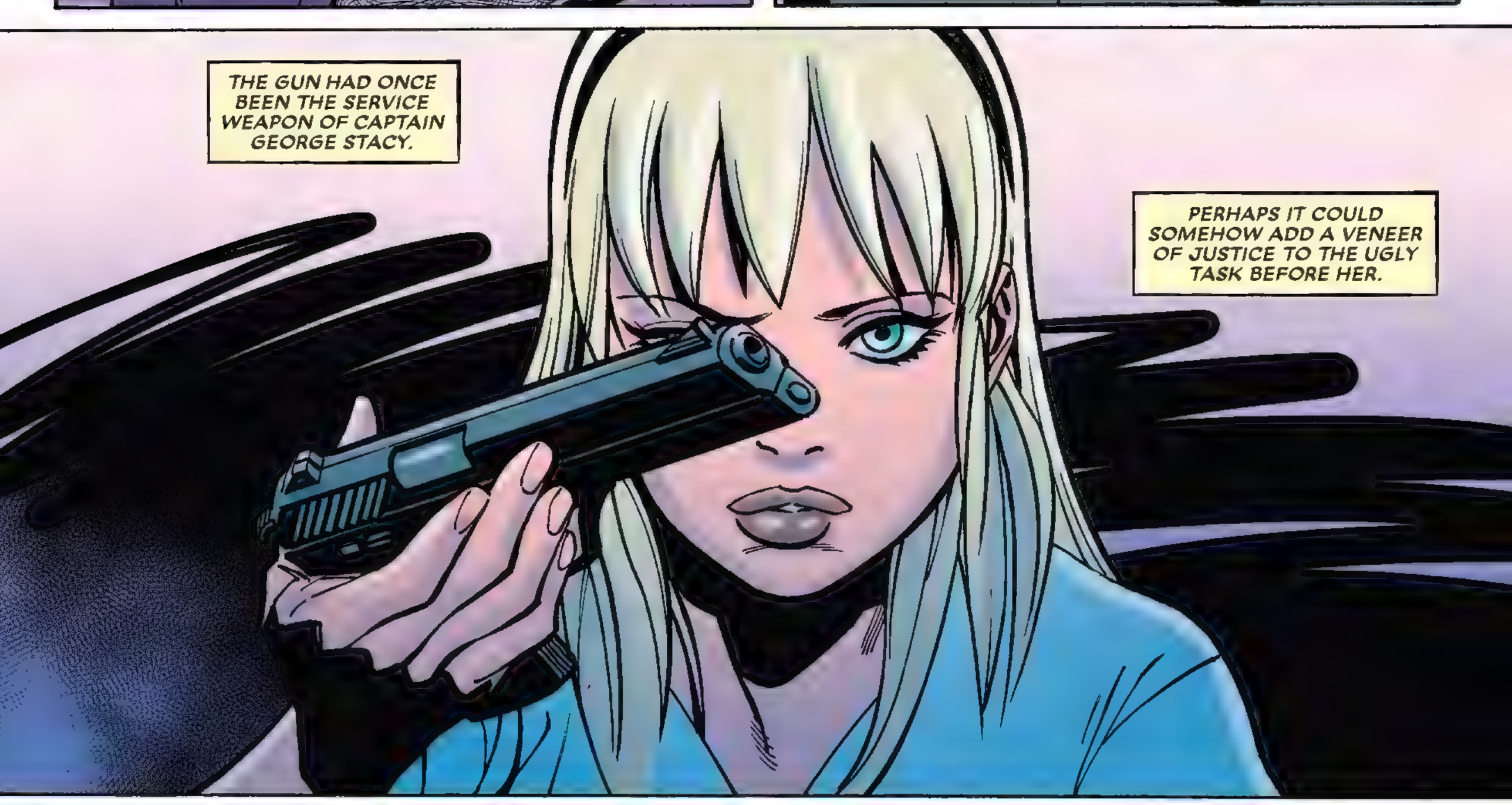

CAREFULLY...

AND THAT SHOULD JUST ABOUT DO IT.


BUT THERE WAS ONE ASPECT OF THE PLAN THAT GWEN DIDN'T SHARE WITH HARRY.


THE TINIEST OF DETAILS THAT SHE FEARED HER RELUCTANT ALLY WOULD NEVER AGREE TO.

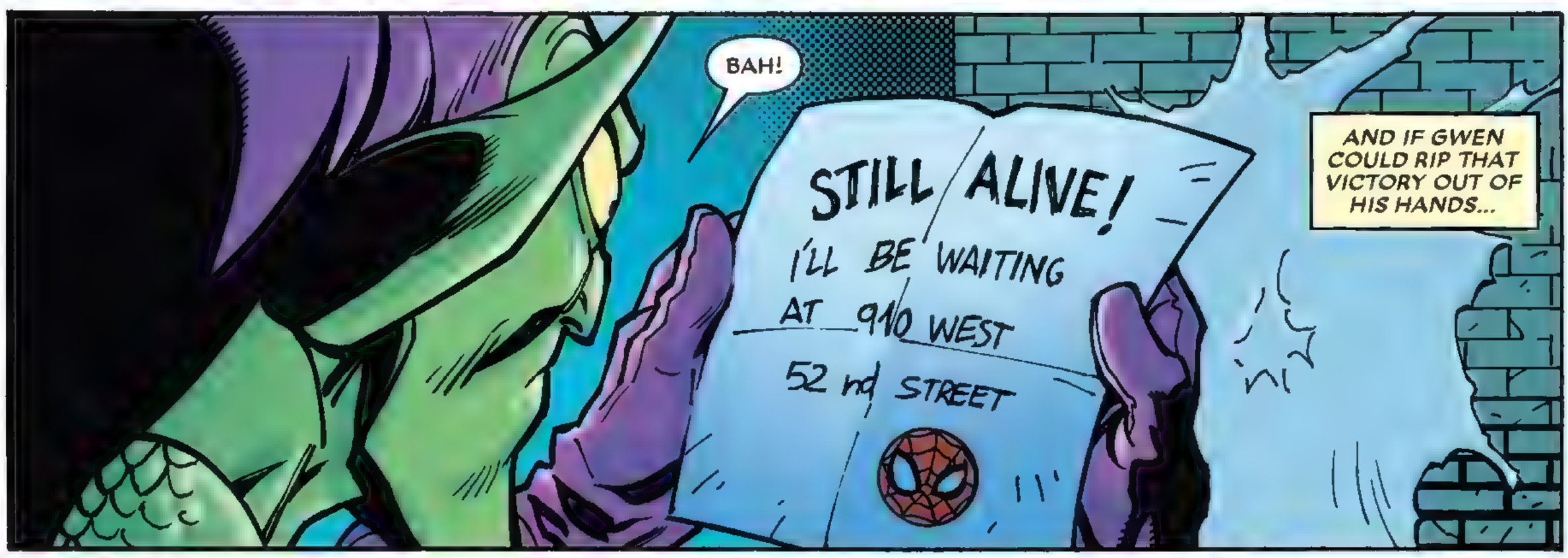



THE GUN HAD ONCE BEEN THE SERVICE WEAPON OF CAPTAIN GEORGE STACY.
PERHAPS IT COULD SOMEHOW ADD A VENEER OF JUSTICE TO THE UGLY TASK BEFORE HER.

BUT HOW TO LURE THE MONSTER INTO THE TRAP THEY HAD BUILT?

GWEN WAS CONVINCED THE GOBLIN WOULD BE DRAWN BACK TO THE SCENE OF HIS BRUTAL VICTORY.
WHAT?!

THAT HE WOULD WANT TO CELEBRATE. TO GLOAT.
WEBBING...?


BAH!
STILL ALIVE! I'LL BE WAITING AT 910 WEST 52nd STREET
AND IF GWEN COULD RIP THAT VICTORY OUT OF HIS HANDS...

...SHE COULD STEER HIM IN WHATEVER DIRECTION SHE WANTED.

I CAN SEE THE GLIDER. HE'S INCOMING.

GET READY.

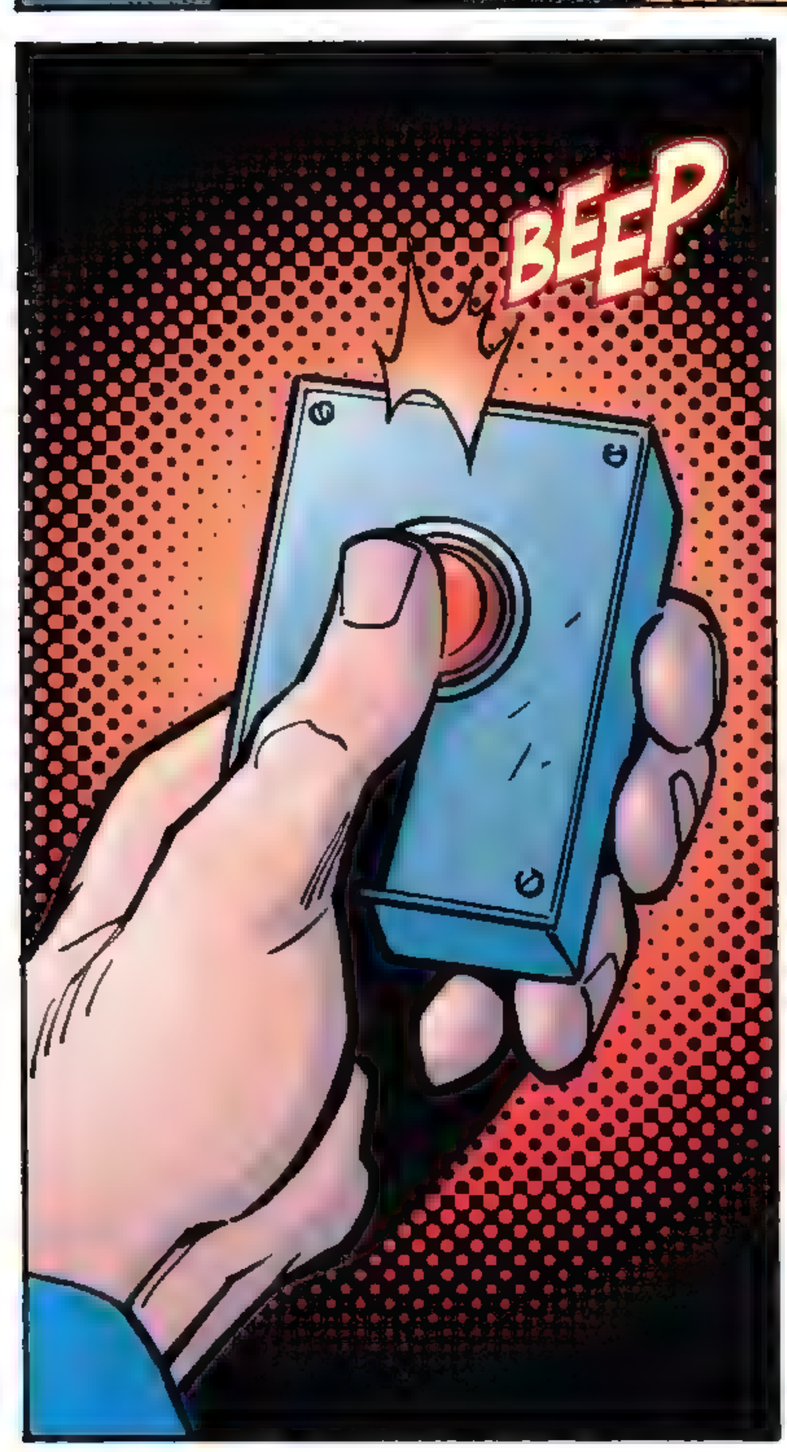
YOU IMPERTINENT LITTLE *BUG!*

THIS TIME, I'LL MAKE *SURE* YOU'RE DEAD!

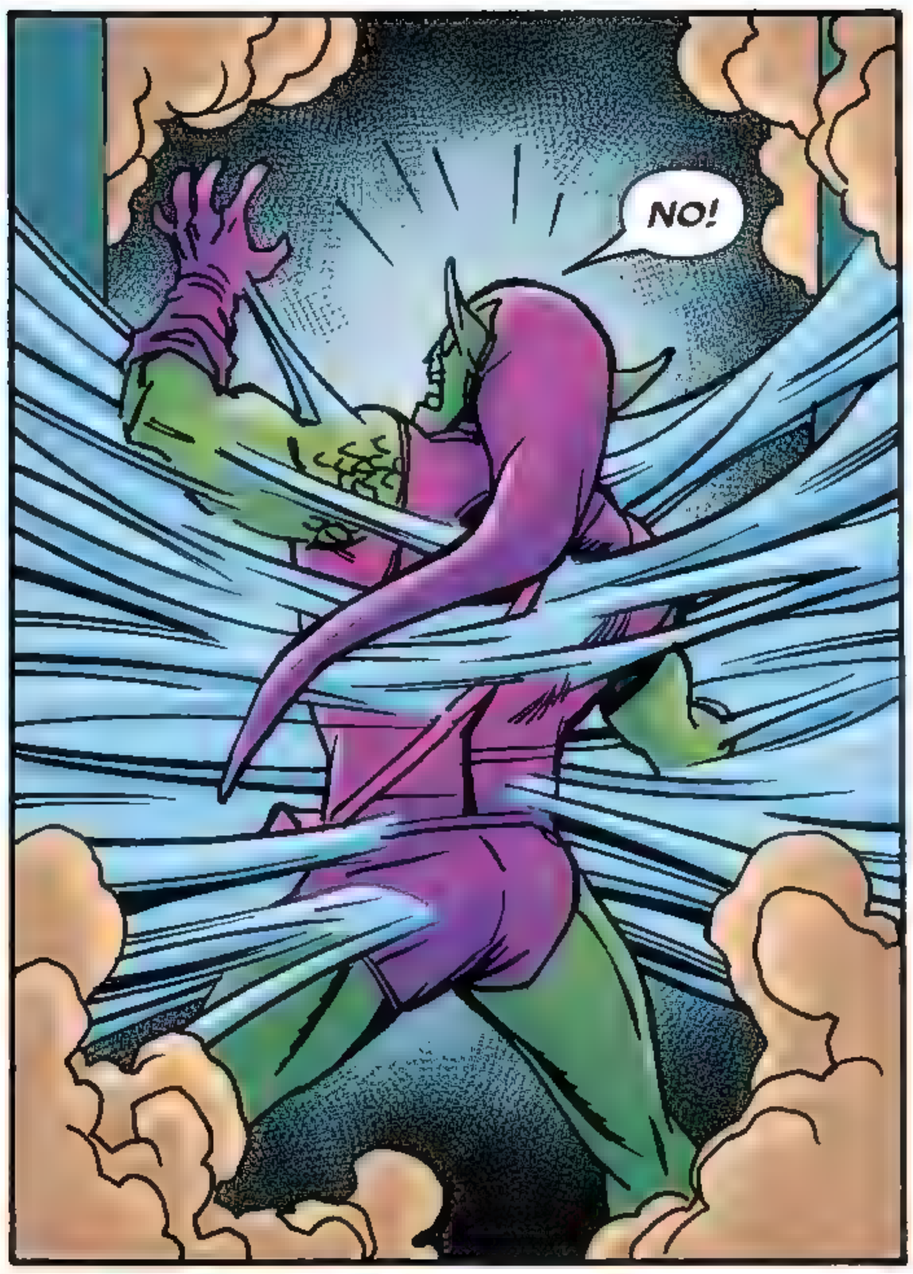
ALMOST THERE!

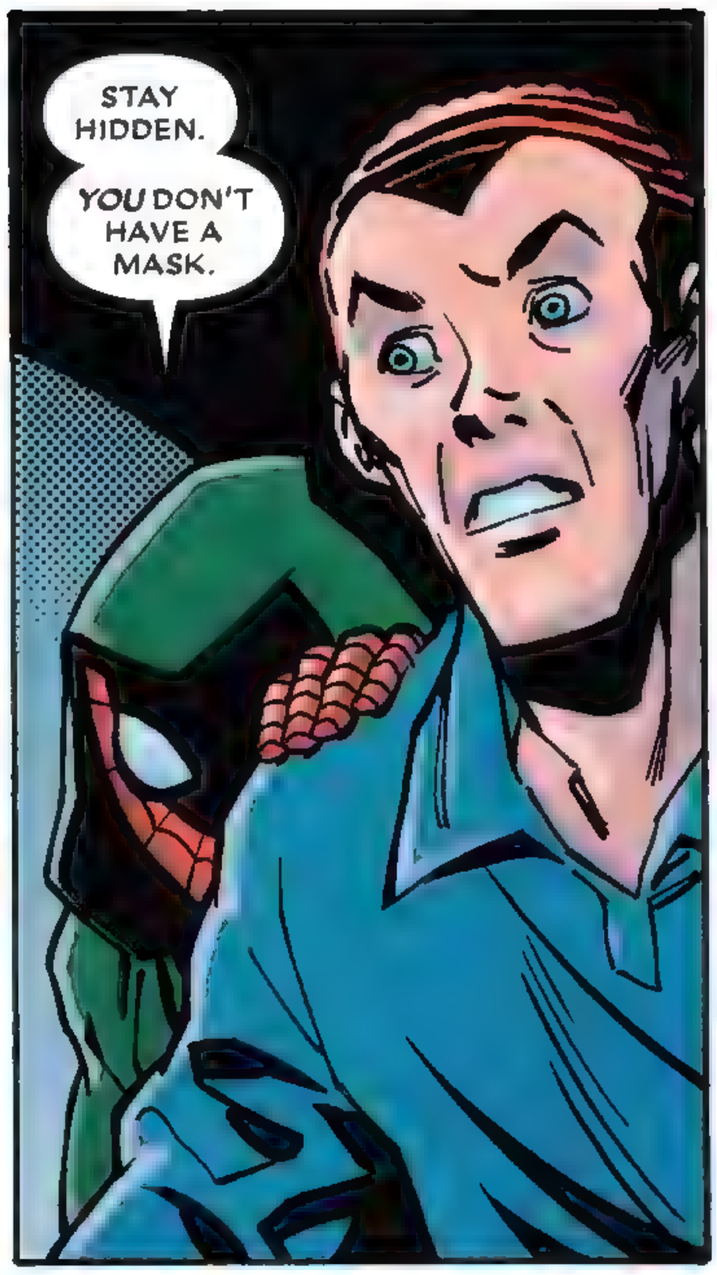
GET READY...

WHERE ARE YOU, YOU LITTLE--?


BEEP

FWOOM
FWOOM
WHA--?!
FWOOM
FWOOM





AND NOW HE'S DEAD.
BECAUSE OF YOU.

NNNNGH! NOT BAD...FOR AN IMPOSTOR.
SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN NOW THAT YOU'VE CAUGHT ME?

ARREST ME? JUSTICE FOR THE POOR SQUASHED SPIDER?
YOU KNOW I'LL TELL EVERYONE WHO HE REALLY WAS.

THIS WAS THE MOMENT SHE HAD BEEN WORKING FOR, BEEN WAITING FOR.

SHE HAD TOLD HERSELF HOW EASY IT WOULD BE. JUST A SLIGHT MOVEMENT OF THE FINGER.
OH, REALLY? YOU THINK YOU HAVE IT IN YOU TO ACTUALLY STOP ME?
THAT YOU CAN DO WHAT THE REAL SPIDER-MAN FAILED TO?

ALL SHE HAD TO DO WAS REMEMBER THAT MOMENT WITH PETER IN THE WATER.

AND SO, SHE REMEMBERED PETER.
BRILLIANT AND SILLY.
BRIMMING WITH LIFE AND PURPOSE AND POTENTIAL.
SO MUCH MORE THAN SHE EVER KNEW.

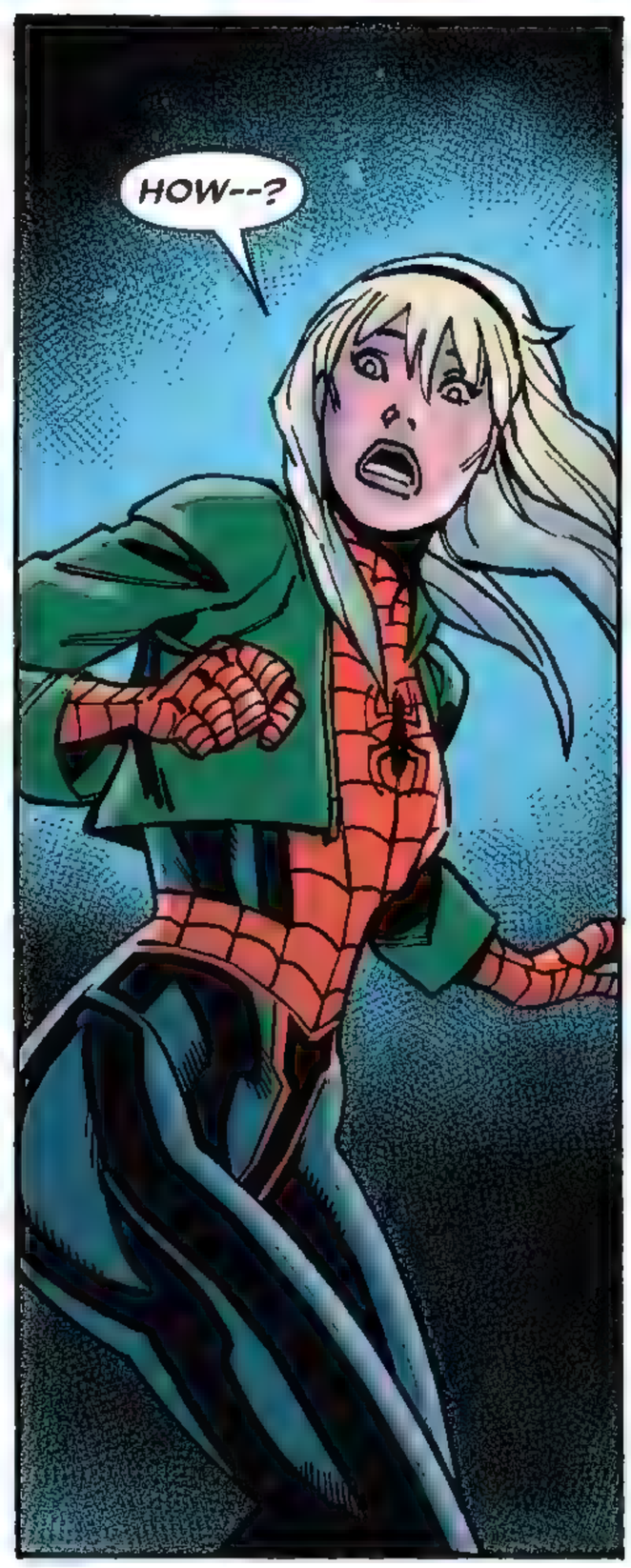
HAHAHAH!
I KNEW YOU WERE TOO WEAK TO PULL THE TRIGGER.

NO.
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL.

YOU?!
PETER WASN'T WEAK. HE WAS A HERO. HE DIDN'T END YOU BECAUSE THAT'S NOT WHO HE WAS.
AND I'M NOT GOING TO BETRAY THAT.

SUCH SENTIMENTAL DRIVEL.
I SHOULD HAVE KILLED YOU WH--

BANG


HOW--?

NO...

I'M NOT WEAK.

AND I'M NO HERO.

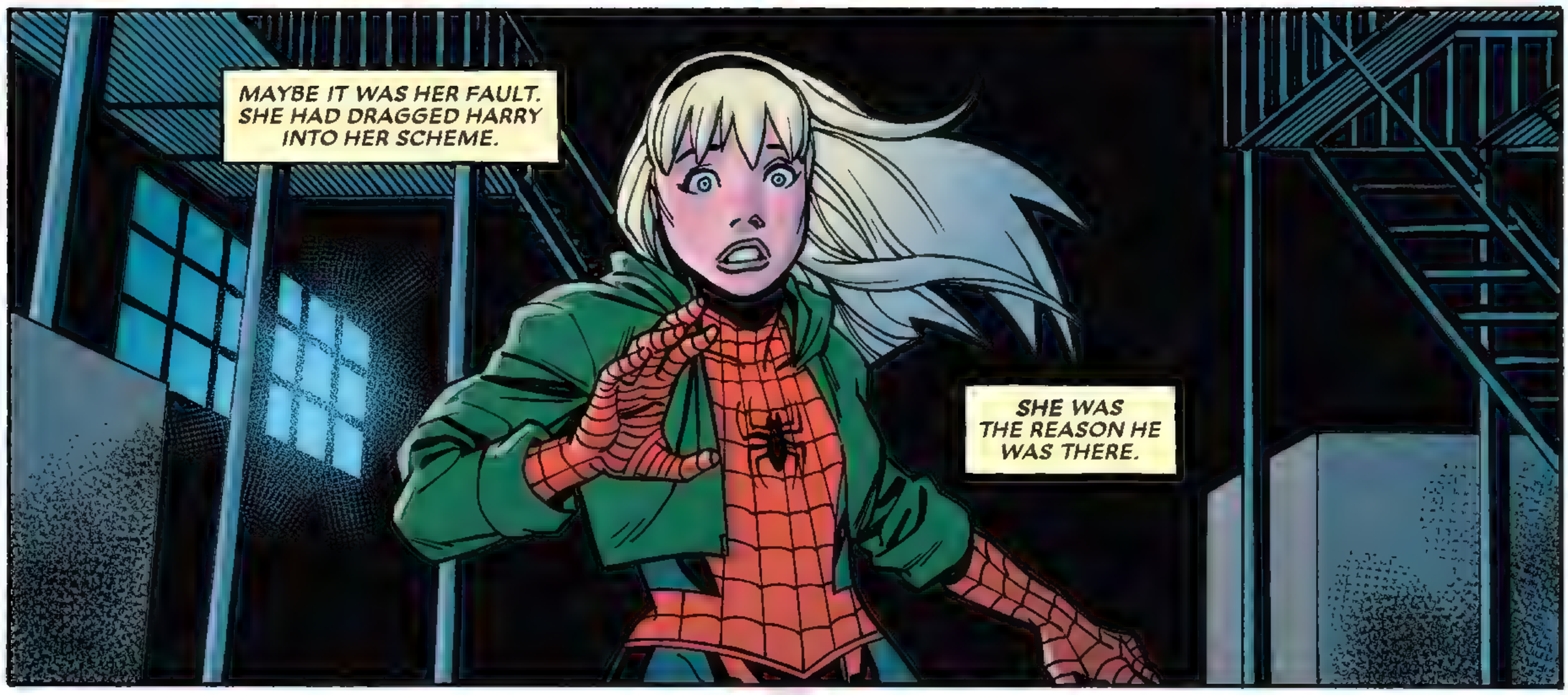
FATHER... YOU'RE--

HARRY... I DIDN'T...
...I DIDN'T *KNOW*...

YOU DID THIS.
YOU *MADE* ME DO THIS.

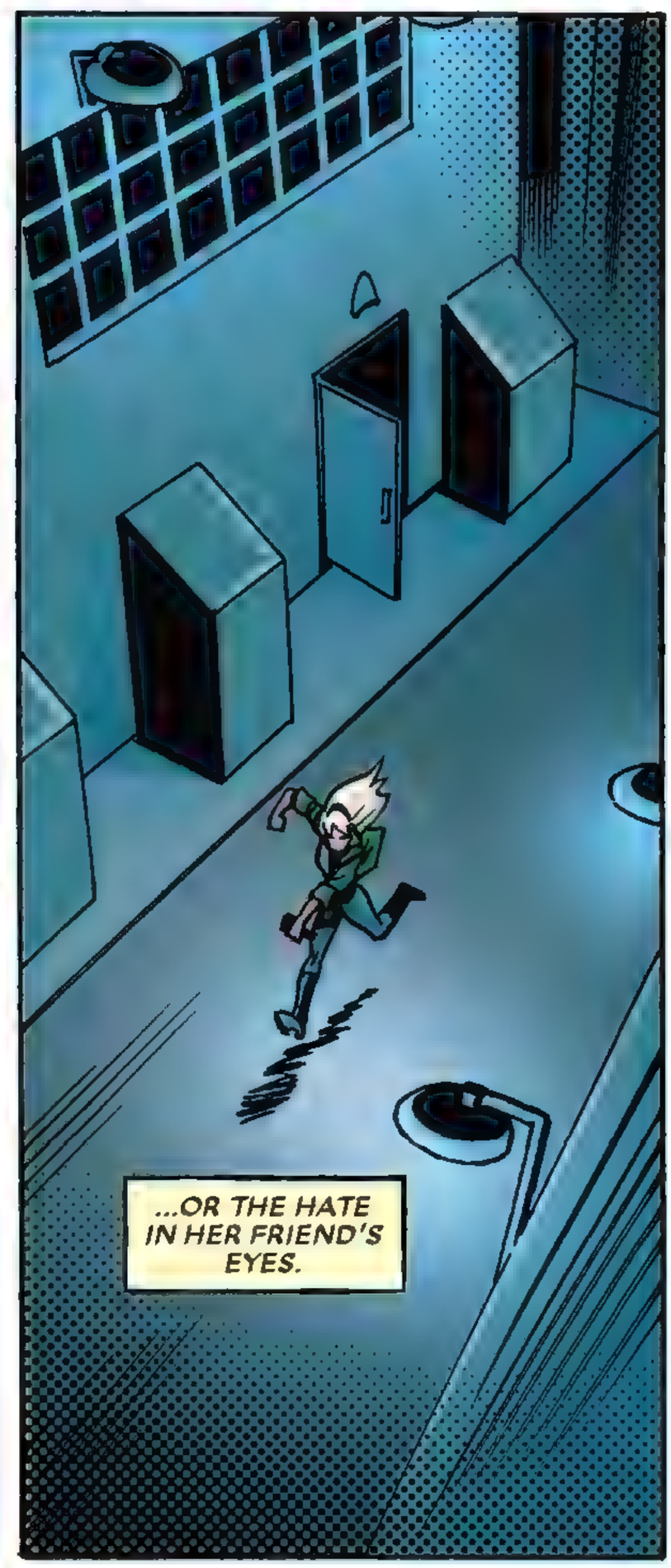
NO. I *NEVER* WANTED YOU TO--

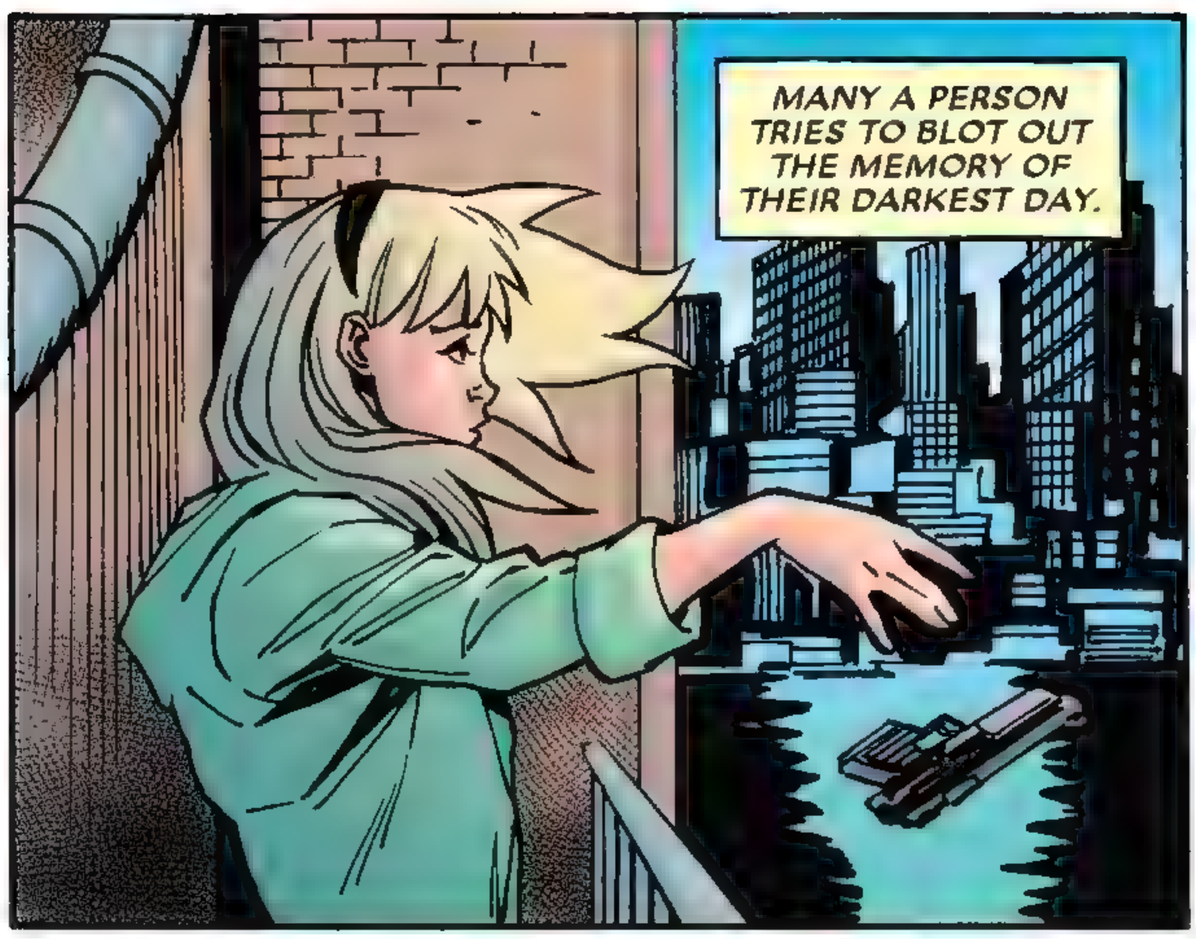
YOU MURDERER!
I'LL MAKE YOU PAY!

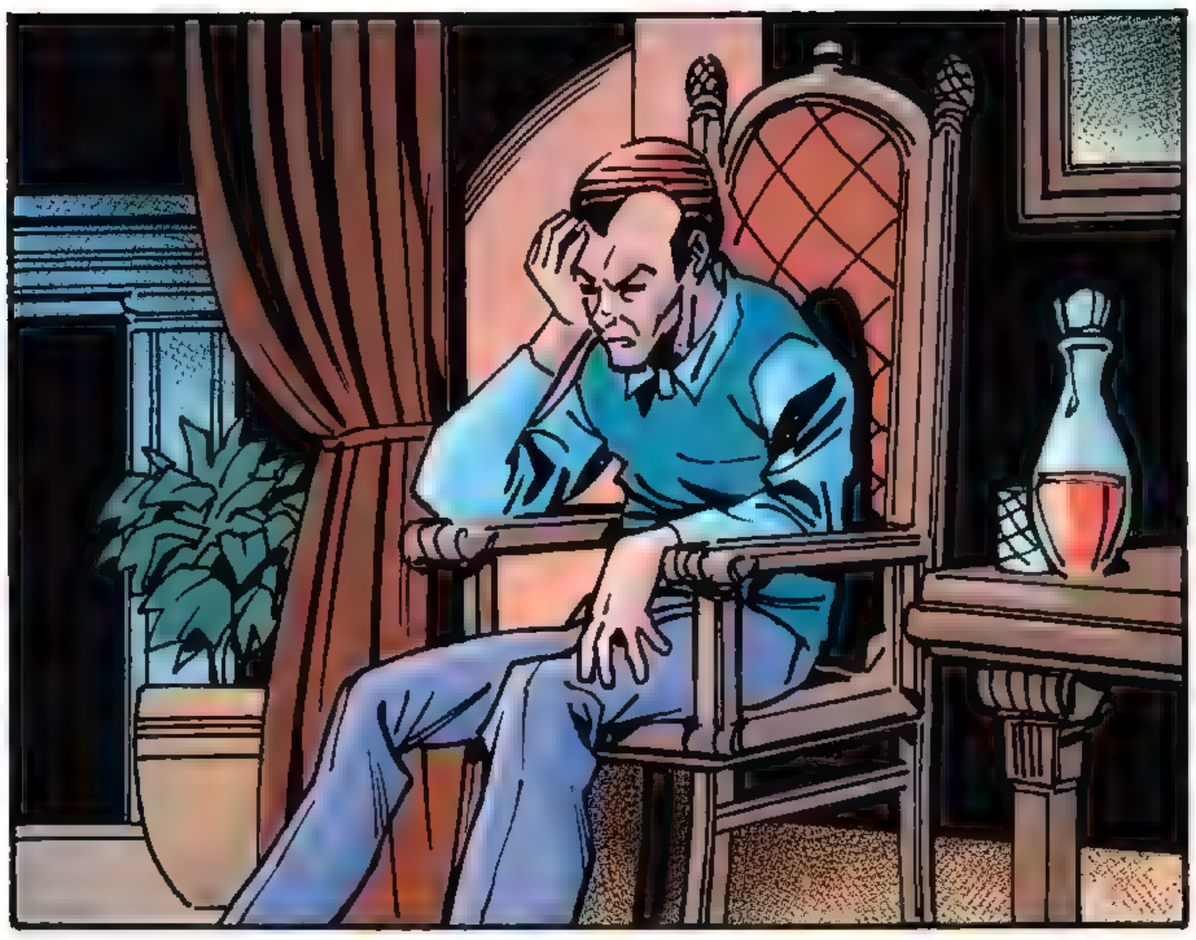

MAYBE IT WAS HER FAULT. SHE HAD DRAGGED HARRY INTO HER SCHEME.
SHE WAS THE REASON HE WAS THERE.

AND SO, SHE DID THE ONLY THING SHE COULD THINK OF.

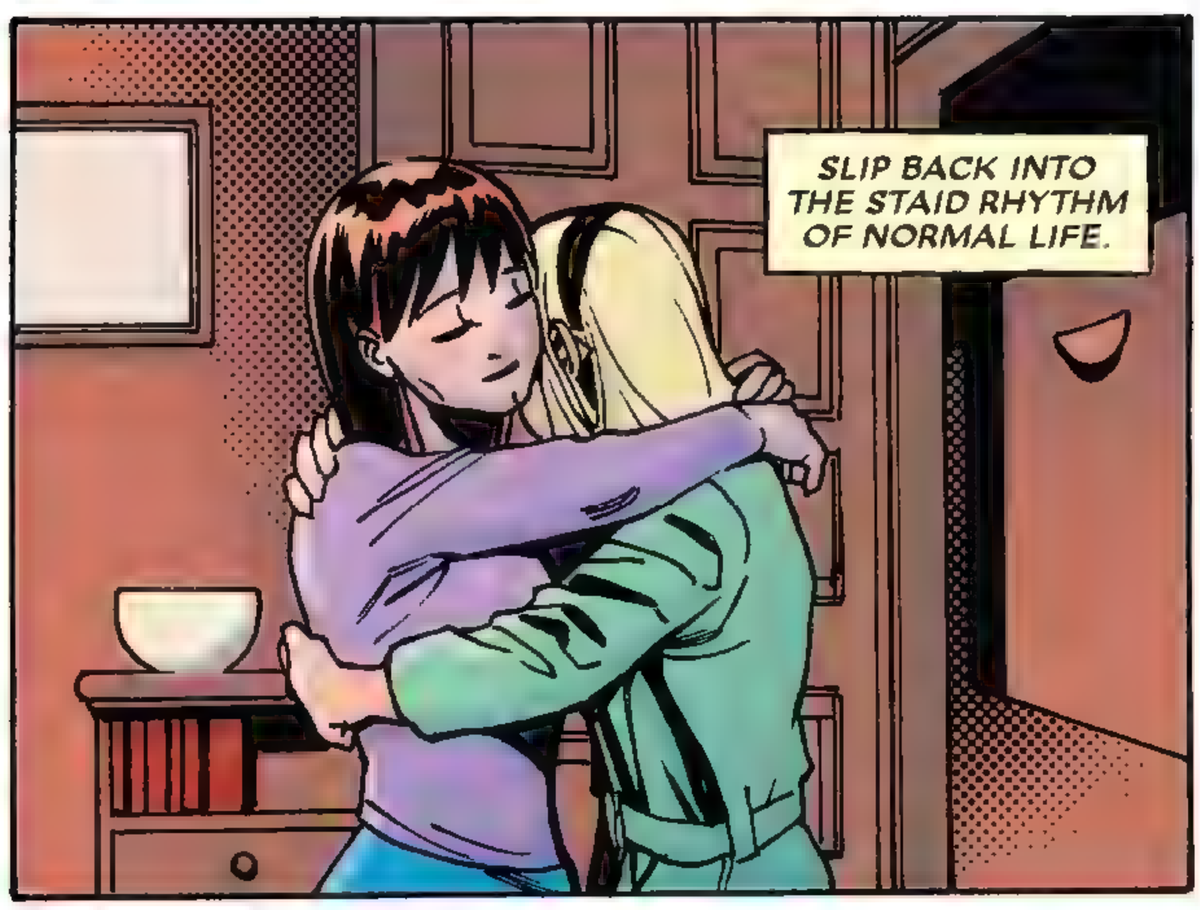
KNOWING THAT SHE COULD NEVER OUTRUN THE SOUND OF THAT GUNSHOT...

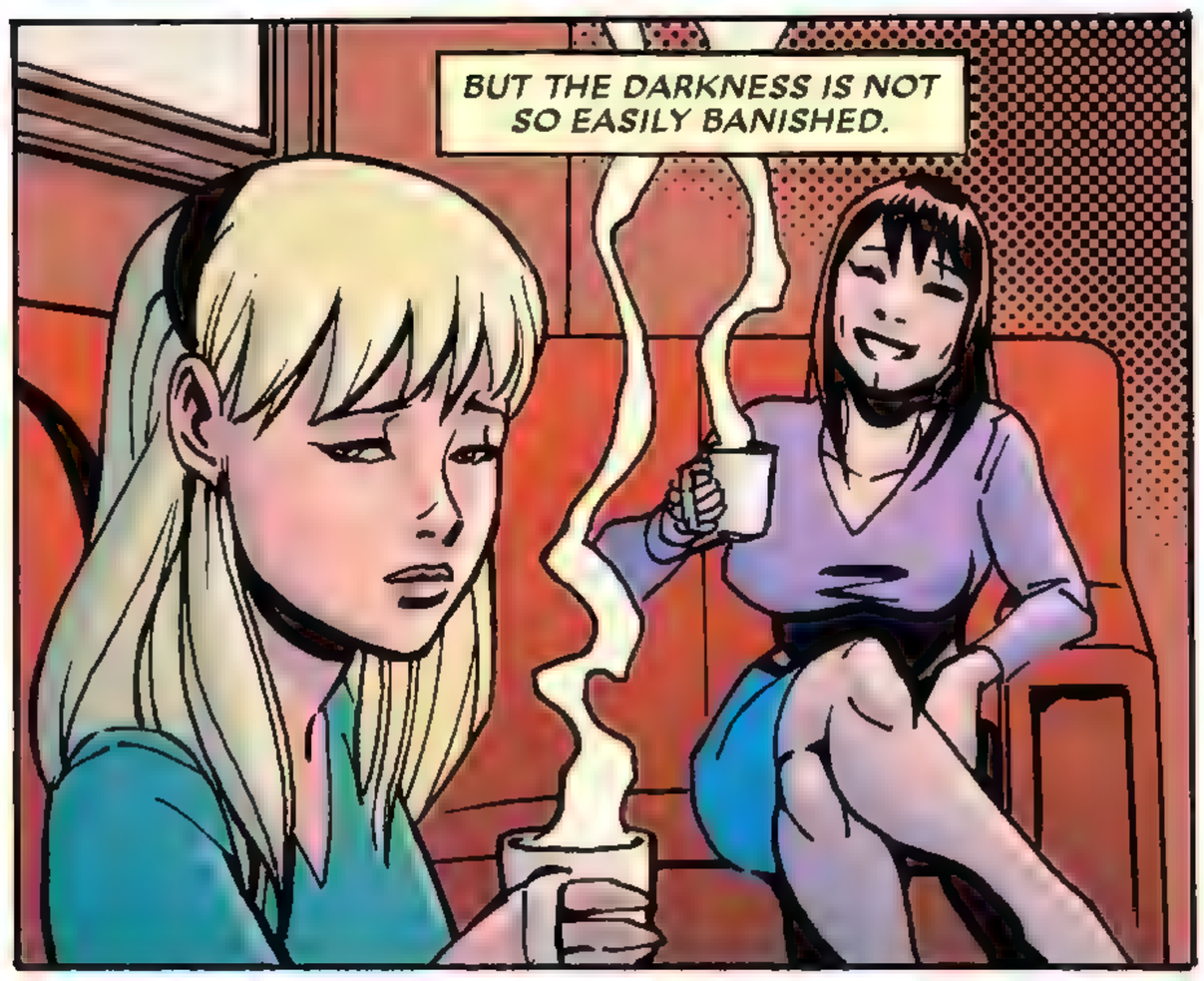

...OR THE HATE IN HER FRIEND'S EYES.

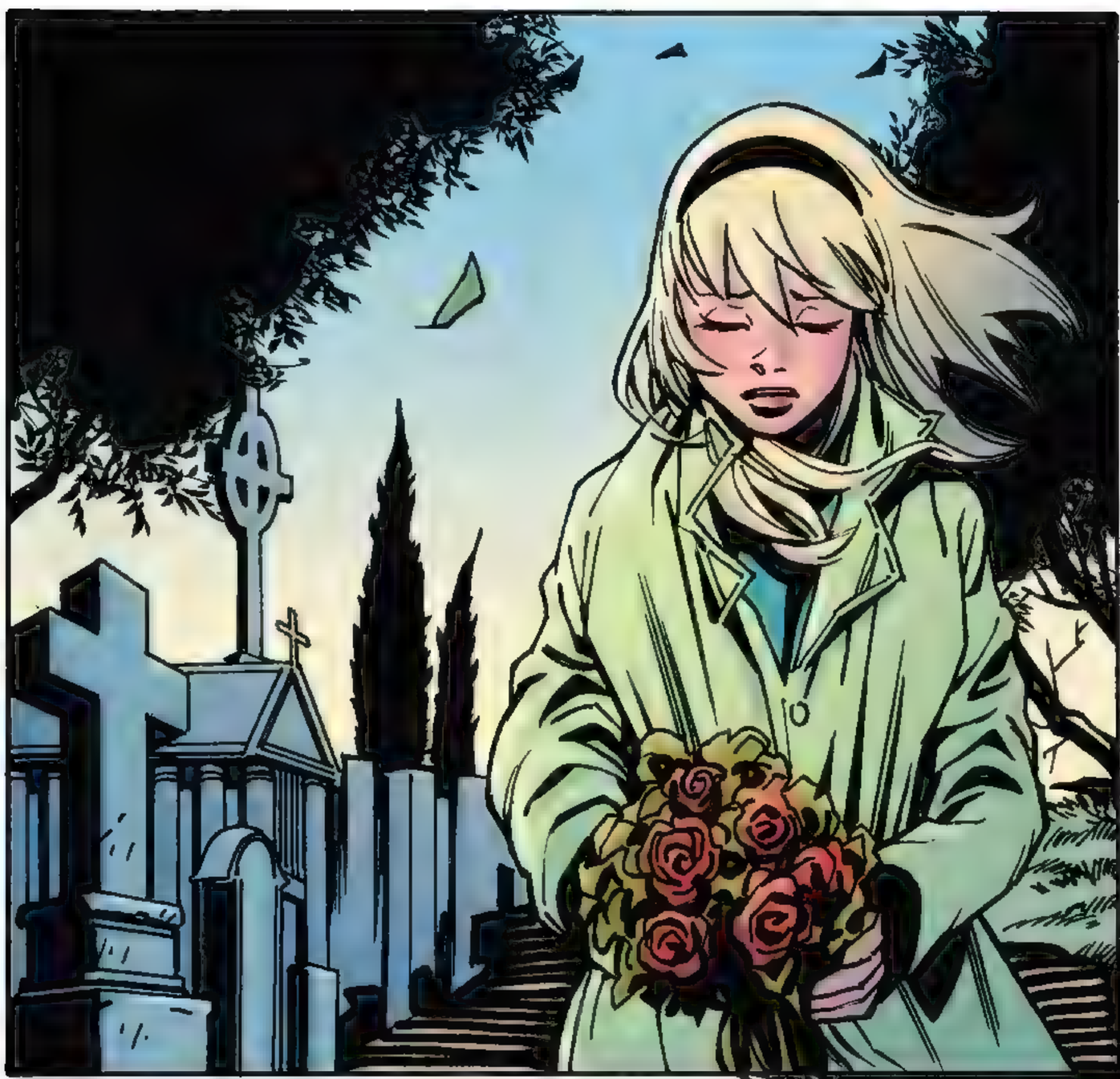

MANY A PERSON TRIES TO BLOT OUT THE MEMORY OF THEIR DARKEST DAY.



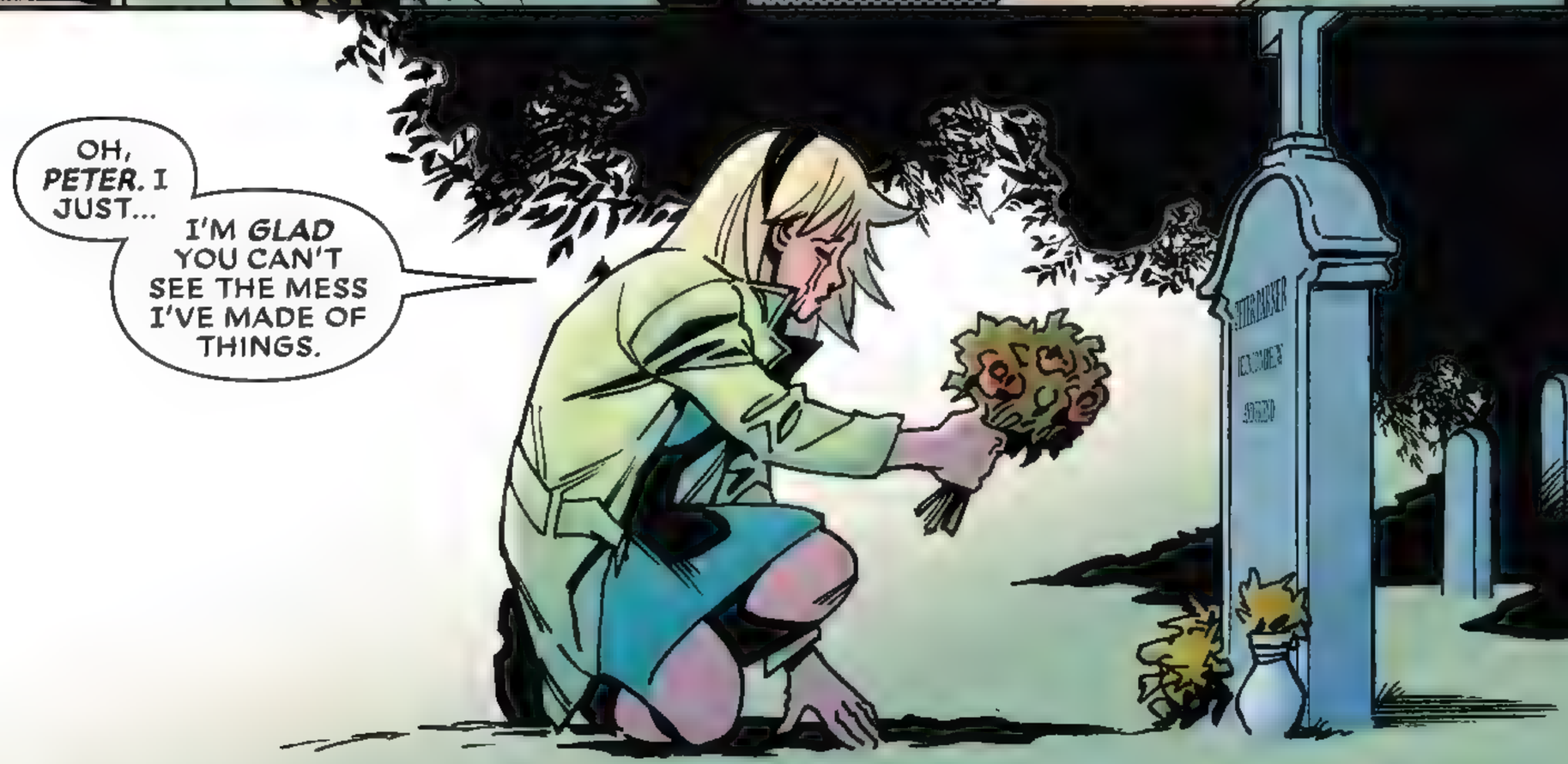
THEY CAN DROWN THE EVIDENCE.

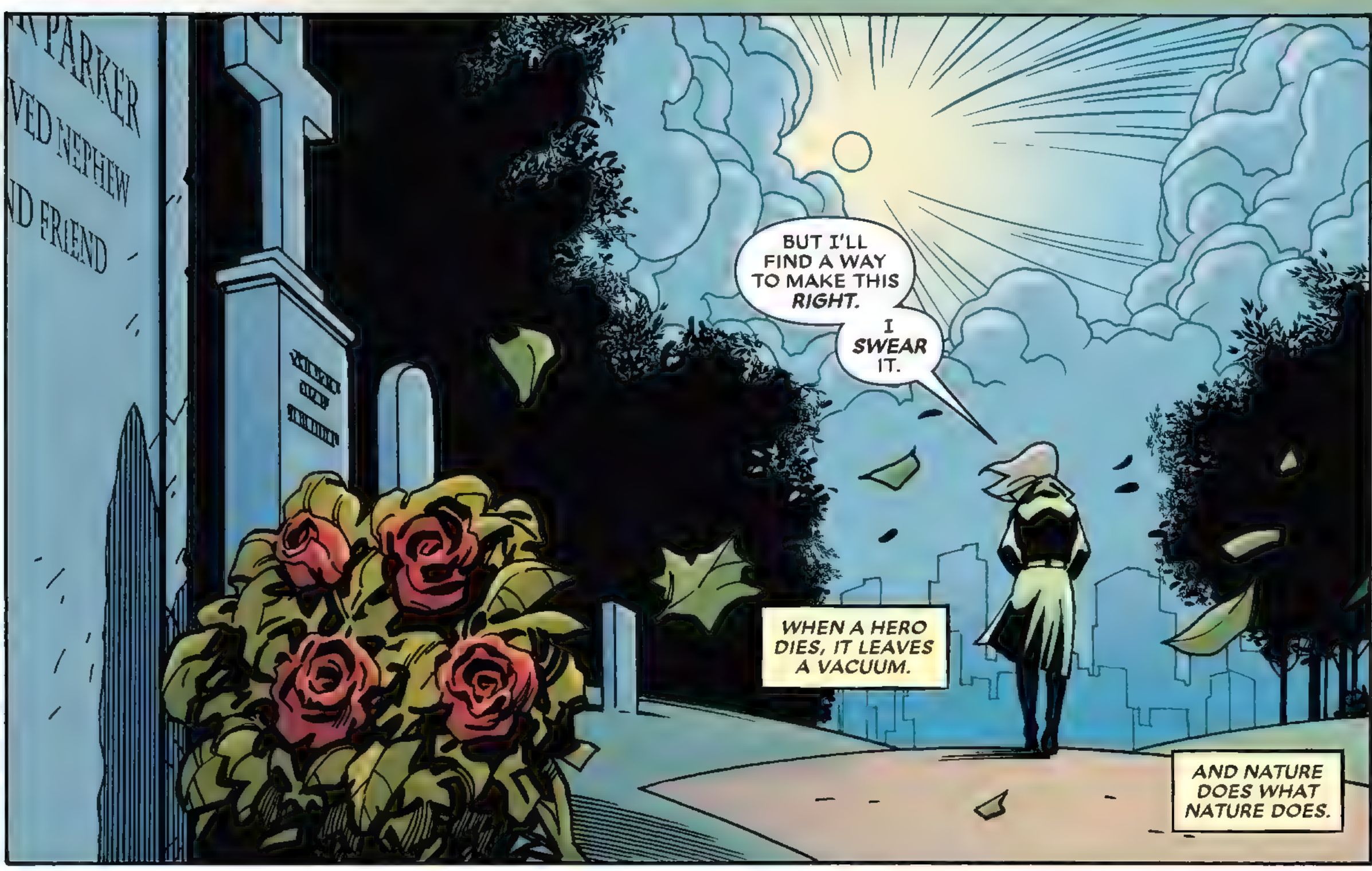

SLIP BACK INTO THE STAID RHYTHM OF NORMAL LIFE.

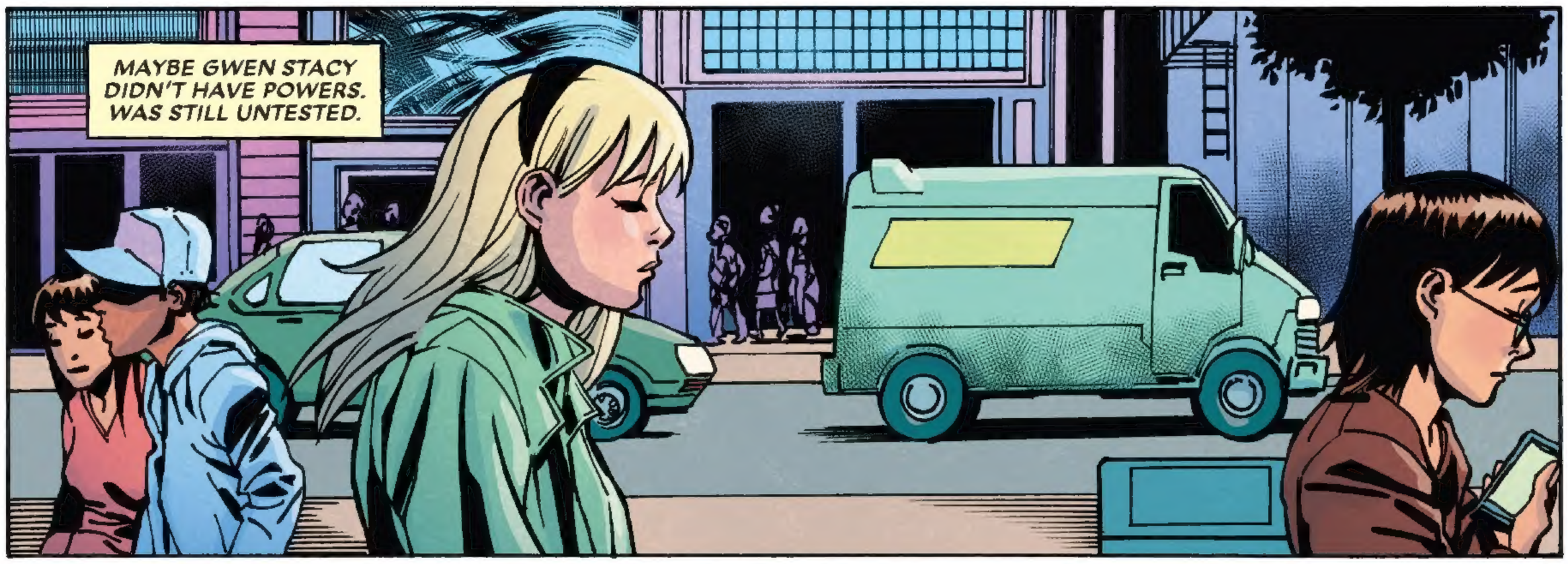

BUT THE DARKNESS IS NOT SO EASILY BANISHED.



PETER PARKER
BELOVED NEPHEW
AND FRIEND
I'M SURE YOU'D MAKE SOME STUPID JOKE ABOUT HOW I'M *SHOWING YOU UP* WITH THESE FLOWERS.
I NEVER THOUGHT I COULD MISS YOUR JOKES *SO* MUCH.


OH, *PETER.* I JUST...
I'M *GLAD* YOU CAN'T SEE THE MESS I'VE MADE OF THINGS.


BUT I'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE THIS *RIGHT.*
I *SWEAR* IT.
WHEN A HERO DIES, IT LEAVES A VACUUM.
AND NATURE DOES WHAT NATURE DOES.


MAYBE GWEN STACY DIDN'T HAVE POWERS. WAS STILL UNTESTED.

BUT SHE HAD MADE A PROMISE.

SHE'D HELPED MAKE A MONSTER.
HAHAHAHA!
OH, HARRY...

AND SHE WAS DONE HIDING FROM BOTH.

MAYBE SHE WASN'T READY TO CALL HERSELF A HERO JUST YET...

...BUT SHE WAS FINALLY STEPPING OUT OF THE SHADOWS OF HER DARKEST DAY.
END.

The Marvel Universe is filled with infinite possibilities. One small choice can change the course of history and set the universe on any number of different paths. What if those choices, those moments, turned the situation...dark?

WHAT IF...? DARK

SPIDER-GWEN

What if...on the night of the fateful battle against the **GREEN GOBLIN**--Peter Parker, A.K.A. **THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN,** had died, NOT Gwen Stacy?!

GERRY CONWAY AND JODY HOUSER
PLOT

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FOR THE ORIGIN OF GWEN STACY, SPIDER-WOMAN!

ZONE